United Nations S/PV.7695

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7695th meeting
Wednesday, 25 May 2016, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Aboulatta	(Egypt)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Japan	Mr. Okamura
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. Walbridge
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Barro
	Spain	Mr. González de Linares Palou
	Ukraine	Mr. Vitrenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Suárez Moreno

Agenda

The situation in Liberia

Letter dated 15 April 2016 from the Panel of Experts on Liberia established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003) addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2016/348)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council. Corrections* should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

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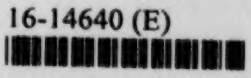

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Liberia

Letter dated 15 April 2016 from the Panel of Experts on Liberia established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003) addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2016/348)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Liberia to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2016/472, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Angola, Japan, Senegal, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/348, which contains the text of a letter dated 15 April 2016 from the Panel of Experts on Liberia established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003) addressed to the President of the Security Council.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Angola, China, Egypt, France, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Russian Federation, Senegal, Spain, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2288 (2016).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Pressman (United States of America): As we terminate sanctions today, it is worth recalling how far Liberia has come. Today is the first day that Liberia is not subject to United Nations sanctions since 1992. The current sanctions date from 2003, shortly after Charles Taylor went into exile and a comprehensive peace agreement had been signed. At that time, the Security Council took swift and effective action to establish a strong sanctions regime aimed at supporting Liberia's peace agreement. The sanctions first included an arms embargo, a targeted travel ban and import bans on the principal natural resources that were funding the conflict, namely, round logs and timber products originating in Liberia and rough diamonds from Liberia.

Those innovative natural-resource sanctions, which were carefully tailored to the specific context in Liberia, made a powerful contribution to Liberia's peace and security. The Council adjusted the sanctions as the situation on the ground changed, adding a targeted assets freeze. Importantly, the Council clearly articulated the objectives of those measures, and therefore when it would be prepared to terminate them. The arms and travel sanctions were aimed at supporting the ceasefire, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts and the implementation of the peace agreement, as well as establishing and maintaining stability in Liberia and, more generally, in the region.

The sanctions on diamonds were aimed at preventing diamonds from fuelling the conflict and at supporting the establishment of a certificate-of-origin regime. The timber sanctions were geared towards ensuring that revenues from that industry were not used to fuel conflict. Over time, as the situation in Liberia stabilized and the criteria were progressively met, the Security Council responded by gradually terminating the natural-resource sanctions, scaling back the arms embargo and, finally last year, terminating the targeted sanctions measures. Today, more than 12 years after the end of Liberia's brutal civil war and the Council's imposition of sanctions, Liberia continues to consolidate its progress, and the Security Council has determined that the criteria for lifting the sanctions have been met, thereby allowing us to fully terminate the regime. What lessons can we learn from that history that may be applicable to the threats to international peace and security we face today?

One lesson is that the Security Council must be creative and courageous in its design of sanctions. The Liberia natural-resources sanctions were well-

tailored to the context and demonstrated the Council's determination to address unconventional sources of conflict financing. We would do well to consider similar measures to target the funding and fuelling of conflict in other situations we face today. That is neither unprecedented nor novel. It is effective, and one need look no further than Liberia.

A second lesson is that the effective monitoring and enforcement of sanctions is imperative. The Liberia Panel of Experts, and the Panel of Experts on Sierra Leone before it, reported on many issues that States saw as sensitive: organized smuggling networks, trafficking in diamonds and control over and the use of revenues from the timber industry. The sensitivity of that reporting only serves to illustrate the importance of it. The need could not be cleared then, or indeed today, for candid, diligent and detailed reporting in driving the evolution of sanctions to better address the challenges that the international community faces. After all, we establish such panels to provide us with information about situations that pose a threat to international peace and security. We should be ashamed when we prevent them from doing their jobs, as some are doing in other contexts today, even if we disagree with what they have to say.

A third lesson is that the effective collaboration of international partners and mechanisms is key part of making sanctions work effectively. We saw that in Liberia with productive cooperation among the sanctions committee, the Panel of Experts, the United Nations Mission in Liberia and the Liberian Government. That was a testament to what can be achieved when sanctions are deployed with purpose, grounded within a clear strategy for promoting international peace and security and coupled with the necessary political progress from Governments.

The fourth and last is less a lesson that a reminder. Sanctions, even the sanctions that last the longest, do not last forever. Sanctions end. We saw another example of that earlier this year with the termination of the Côte d'Ivoire sanctions regime. Just as we must never hesitate to strengthen sanctions and their enforcement if necessary to address threats to international peace and security, so must we move expeditiously to wind down and end sanctions when they no longer serve the purpose or when they have achieved what was sought. That is not to say that Liberia's work to improve its internal security is finished. In order for Liberia to safeguard the gains achieved over the past 12 years, we encourage the Government to prioritize further capacity-building of its security sector by ensuring that it has the necessary legal framework in place and by continuing to strengthen the capacity of its security agencies to better monitor arms flows, mark weapons and patrol its borders. We encourage the legislature to take the remaining steps to finalize the firearms and ammunition control act, which is an important piece of legislation in order to address gaps in Liberia's legal framework for arms and ammunition management.

But perception is not the goal of a Security Council sanctions regime. Rather, the goal is to address a threat to international peace and security. That is not everything, but it is enough. The United States will continue to work closely with Liberia as it consolidates its progress towards peace and stability. Today we celebrate this transition and the role that the Security Council has played in helping restore peace in Liberia.

Mr. Okamura (Japan): Japan welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2288 (2016). We would like to express our appreciation to the Permanent Mission of the United States for leading the process towards its adoption. I would also like to thank the Permanent Representative of Ukraine, Chair of the sanctions committee, and the Panel of Experts for their dedicated work.

After a 13-year sanctions regime, Liberia has overcome not only the threat of conflict but also the Ebola crisis that disrupted the country's peacebuilding process and took a devastating toll on the people of Liberia. Japan commends Liberia for its endurance in the face of such difficult challenges.

The issue that remains for Liberia is to build resilient national institutions from which all Liberians — young and old, men and women — can benefit. As yet, certain important security laws, such as the firearms and ammunition control act, have not been enacted. We certainly hope that they will be enacted expeditiously as the first step on the longer journey of institution-building. Such legislation will help to strengthen the capacities of the security sector and build trust between the people and the authorities.

Japan is confident that Liberia's leadership will accelerate the necessary legislative processes with both determination and ownership. We trust that, with the support of the international community, including through the Peacebuilding Commission, Liberia will

serve as a model for overcoming fragility and building sound and resilient institutions.

Mr. Vitrenko (Ukraine): As a sponsor of today's resolution 2288 (2016), Ukraine took into account the fact that it is a logical and much-desired outcome of the dedicated efforts of the Security Council, the United Nations and the international community to restore peace and stability in Liberia. Less than a month ago, we took a similar step in completely lifting the Côte d'Ivoire sanctions regime. Both those countries have travelled a long, hard road to arrive at that juncture. We heartily commend Liberians and Ivorians for their perseverance and genuine commitment to peace, which made our adoption of resolutions 2283 (2016) and 2288 (2016) possible.

We also want to give due credit to the two countries' international partners for helping them to meet the criteria required for the cancellation of sanctions. But there is still a long way to go before sustainable peace and stability are achieved in West Africa, with numerous challenges facing its countries. In order for Liberia to address them, we look forward particularly to seeing it adopt and implement appropriate legislation for managing arms and ammunition, as well as the country's completion of the weapons-marking process. Potential threats of terrorism must be dealt with with an emphasis on the regional context, which is why the Council should remain vigilant and keep a watchful eye on Liberia.

Ukraine is proud to have contributed to the stabilization of Liberia, both through its active participation in the United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts and as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003). That Committee has now just become history. On behalf of its Chair, I would like to thank all the members of the Committee, the Secretariat and the Panel of Experts for their assistance.

Mr. Shen Bo (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Thanks to the joint efforts of the Liberian Government and the international community, Liberia's national reconstruction and economic development have got back on track in the past few years. The Liberian Government has shouldered its responsibility for safeguarding national security and has made progress with security legislation, weapons marking and border control. China appreciates the positive efforts of the Liberian Government and the Liberian people to safeguard national peace and stability, and congratulates them on their achievements in nation-building.

The Security Council has lifted the sanctions on Liberia. That represents the international community's recognition of Liberia's peace process and national development. We hope that the international community will continue to provide Liberia with the assistance it needs to consolidate peace and to bring its national reconstruction and economic development to new levels, on a basis of respect for its national sovereignty.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Liberia.

Mr. Patten (Liberia): I would like to express to you, Mr. President, and to the members of the Security Council the deep gratitude and appreciation of my President and of the Government and the people of Liberia for the unfaltering support that the Council has given us over the years and for its continued engagement with Liberia.

Thirteen years ago, the Council deemed it expedient to institute measures that would not only help to restore peace to Liberia but also ensure the establishment of mechanisms to guide and protect the peace and stability attained. One such measure was the imposition of sanctions under resolution 1521 (2003). The usefulness of sanctions continues to be contested. Some Members of the United Nations believe that they serve no useful purpose. Others insist that they are necessary to address particular situations when they undermine international peace and security.

In the context of Liberia, targeted sanctions were very constructive. The sanctions regime contributed in large measure to the country's stabilization and stimulated post-conflict economic recovery. They targeted some of our natural resources, including timber and diamonds, and imposed restrictions on the supply and importation of arms, on finances and on individuals considered a threat to Liberia's peace and stability. They also targeted individuals who might have engaged in activities aimed at undermining peace and stability.

Liberia played its part in cooperating with the Council over those 13 years. In many instances, capacity constraints inhibited speedy progress. However, the Government is pleased that its work with the Council and its Panel of Experts on meeting their expectations provided it with another opportunity to make Liberia

a safe and stable country for all Liberians, as well as for foreign residents. The Council has been particularly concerned about the enactment of laws regulating firearms. I can now inform the Council that the House of Representatives recently concurred with the Senate in passing the 2015 Firearms and Ammunition Control Act, which establishes a legal framework for managing arms in the country. As a complement to that, we have also passed police and immigration acts.

Liberia would like to once again commend the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003), made up of all the members of the Council, and its various Chairs, with whom we have interacted directly over the years, for their steadfast support. We also thank the Panel of Experts, whose members made many visits to Liberia, neighbouring countries, the subregion and beyond, to monitor and ensure the implementation of the sanctions regime.

Liberia has reached a critical juncture. In the next couple of weeks, the transition, under the transition plan, from the United Nations Mission in Liberia to national security institutions will benefit from another decision by the Council. The termination of the sanctions regime will further motivate the Government in its efforts to strengthen the capacity of national security institutions as they assume their constitutional role of protecting lives and property and safeguarding the territorial integrity of Liberia.

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.7696

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President:	Mr. Aboulatta	(Egypt)
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	Japan	Mr. Okamura
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. Taula
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Diallo
	Spain	Mr. González de Linares Palou
	Ukraine	Mr. Vitrenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
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Agenda

Security Council mission

Briefing by the Security Council mission to the Horn of Africa (17 to 22 May 2016)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council mission

Briefing by the Security Council mission to the Horn of Africa (17 to 22 May 2016)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by the two co-leads of the Security Council mission to the Horn of Africa, namely, Egypt and the United Kingdom.

The representative of the United Kingdom shall now make a statement on the Council's visit to Somalia.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): I thank you, Sir, for giving me this opportunity to brief my colleagues on the Council's visit to Somalia, to be followed by your own briefing on the visit to Kenya and Egypt. I want to begin by thanking you for your initiative to organize the visit to the Horn of Africa, which was an extremely useful and timely one. I want also to thank our colleagues from the Secretariat for their role in organizing extremely valuable programmes, and the Permanent Representatives and Deputy Permanent Representatives who went on the trip. My message to those who did not is: "Bad luck. You missed a good and very productive visit."

During the Somalia leg of the visit, the Council had an opportunity to reaffirm its oversight, in detail, of what is happening in the country and to reaffirm its commitment to continue the journey with the Somali people as they progress towards stability and prosperity. The visit came at a crucial time in an important year for Somalia. We are halfway between 2012 and 2020. In 2012 the Somali people set out their four-year vision, entitled Vision 2016, which is due to culminate in elections in August. By 2020 there will be one person, one vote elections in Somalia, which will conclude the transitional phase.

The electoral process is a central part of that transition and one that, as the Council, we have paid a lot of attention to over the years. However, when we arrived in Mogadishu, on Thursday, that process was in deadlock. The President and the regional Presidents whom we met had reached an agreement on the electoral model earlier in the year. but the Parliament had not been able to endorse the agreement, leading to a delay in preparations for the August elections. We therefore met President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, Prime Minister Sharmarke and the regional leaders of Puntland, the South-West administration and Galmudug to express our concern at that delay and to urge swift adoption of the model.

The President gave assurances that he would continue to work for the Parliament's adoption of the model. He also said that, if that were not possible, he would use his presidential decree, which is absolutely within his rights to do, in order to get the model validated and endorsed. I am very pleased to say that, shortly after the Council left Mogadishu, in the early hours of Sunday morning, President Hassan Sheik Mohamud did indeed take the necessary step of issuing a presidential decree to ensure that there were no extension to the constitutionally mandated terms of Somalia's executive and legislative orders. I think that was a good outcome of the visit to the central question of the electoral process in the run-up to elections, which are due to take place in August. I also think — taking a step back from the details — that this is an example of how a Council visit can make a positive difference, either in terms of preventing things from getting worse, in terms of preventive diplomacy, or — in this case — as a way of encouraging a country to do the right thing and actually to move things forward in a positive direction. I am very glad that we were able to do that. That is a summary of what we are discussing on the political track.

We also spent a lot of time on security issues. We had a good meeting with the Somali Deputy Prime Minister, who is in charge of developing the national security architecture for Somalia. That will provide, among other things, civilian oversight of the Somali security forces. We also met the Special Representative of the African Union for Somalia and Head of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), Ambassador Francisco Madeira, other senior AMISOM leaders and the leadership of the United Nations Support Office in Somalia. Between them, they outlined the scale of the challenges ahead. I think it was clear to all on the Council's side of the table that security remained a very significant concern in Somalia. As such, I want to take this moment to pay tribute to the men and women of

AMISOM, who are doing sterling work in difficult circumstances to try to bring stability and security to Somalia, as well as to the men and women of the Somali national army and the police who, likewise, are doing all they can to fight Al-Shabaab and to make their country safe for the future. I think that we owe them a huge debt of gratitude. Some of them paid the ultimate sacrifice in that work. We need to continue working with AMISOM and the Somali national army and police in order to create the sort of conditions that will allow Somalia to become a much more peaceful, stable and normal member of the international community.

The challenges for AMISOM are significant and we will have an opportunity — as we will shortly renew its mandate — to look at those in more detail. There are issues related to the desire of troop-contributing countries to continue, or not, their commitment. There are also issues related to commander control and coordination. I think those of us who were on the trip have come back with a much clearer sense of the scale of those challenges. Similarly, with the Somali national army, I was very struck by the scale of what still remains to be done. A lot of us have done a lot in that area over the years, but a huge amount remains to be done in order to allow the Somalis to create a genuinely effective set of security forces. I think there is a lack of clear coordination, both on the Somali side and on the international side. I also think that, between us, we need to do a better job of coordinating the various offers of assistance in terms of the security architecture in order to maximize the impact of that assistance.

I also want to say a word about the broader context. We were able to talk to United Nations and other actors who are involved in the region and in other parts of Somalia's development. We looked at the humanitarian situation and sustainable development. We were able to look at both the long-term consequences of the conflict in Somalia and also some of the root causes. That, in my view, is an essential part of our work on every issue facing us on the Security Council's agenda. As part of that wider work, I was very glad that we were able to meet representatives of civil society. One of the groups was made up of women who are active in Somali politics and in ensuring that the role of women in Somalia goes from strength to strength. They underlined the importance of the Federal Government of Somalia adhering to its commitment to reserve 30 per cent of seats in both the upper and lower houses for women. The Security Council voiced its strong support for that commitment during our visit, as it had done in press statements earlier this year. The lack of diversity in the Security Council in terms of gender equality was also notable, and noticed by those women.

Finally, I want to thank Michael Keating, who is doing an excellent job as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia. I also thank his outstanding team in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, which made the visit of the Council possible and allowed us to take full advantage of the visit and advance this crucial agenda. I am glad to say that the Council issued a press statement on Monday welcoming the progress on the political track. I know that we will all want to continue to follow developments in Somalia very closely and to support Somalia throughout this critical year.

I thank the President of the Council once again for organizing the visit.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I shall now provide a briefing in my national capacity.

Allow me to begin by expressing my appreciation for the confidence the members of the Security Council placed in my delegation during the preparations for the Council's visit to Somalia, Kenya and Egypt last week.

The visit made it possible the Council to achieve three important objectives. First, the Council demonstrated its support for the national efforts made by Somalia to complete the political process. Secondly, after our visit to Kenya, the Council was able to clarify the need for more coordination and cooperation between efforts made at the national and local levels in order to face the challenges with regard to Somali refugees. Thirdly, the Council took the lead in organizing for the first time a consultative meeting with an important regional organization, namely, the League of Arab States.

I would like to thank the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, who shared responsibility for the preparation of the Council's visit, for his coordination and cooperation. I would also like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Somalia, Mr. Michael Keating, the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Nairobi, Ms. Sahle-Work Zewde, and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Mr. Nabil El-Araby, for their efforts in preparing for our visit.

I would like to stress that the Security Council's visit to Somalia illustrated the importance of the timing

of visits by the Council to regions of interest. Indeed, the visit to Mogadishu sent an appropriate, well-timed message to all parties in the country that the Council is interested in the achievements realized since 2012, that all Somalis need to work together to achieve reconciliation and peace, and that the Council will not overlook anything that might obstruct the political process. The latter is something that I intend to discuss in detail at a later stage.

The Council's visit to the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, included an important meeting with President Kenyatta, who set forth his views on the challenges of the Somali political process, the need to establish a Somali army that is capable of shouldering the country's security responsibilities, the challenges facing the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in Somalia, and the requests of Member States for increased support for the Mission. The meeting also included a clear exchange of views on financing the salaries of AMISOM personnel, as well as criticism addressed to Council on its members' commitment to human rights and the fact that some AMISOM personnel have been involved in illegal activities.

The meeting with the President also touched upon one of the most important topics for the international community today, namely, the refugee phenomenon and the socioeconomic and security challenges it poses to receiving countries like Kenya. Accordingly, we discussed the need for the international community to provide greater support to receiving countries to meet these challenges. President Kenyatta urged Council members to support his country's decision to close the Dadaab refugee camp. Council members in turn stressed their appreciation for Kenya's efforts to assume the burden that it faces while stressing the need for Member States to respect their international commitments with regard to the situation of refugees.

The visit to Nairobi also included a meeting with high-level ministerial officials at which discussions took place on logistics and on AMISOM's needs in terms of helicopters and other means of transportation and equipment, on the need to increase the Mission's strength and adjust its mandate accordingly, and on closing the budget gap that resulted from the reduced financing that the Mission has been receiving. We also discussed the security challenges posed by the presence of large numbers of Somali refugees in Kenya and addressed accusations that these refugees have been taking part in terrorist activities. There were also discussions about the negotiations between Kenya and the Jubaland administration on the resettlement of Somali refugees.

The Security Council visit culminated in a key meeting to address the efforts made by certain circles within the United Nations to resolve the humanitarian crisis in Somalia, the difficulty of humanitarian workers gaining access to all areas that are in need of assistance, and the challenges resulting from the increase in recruitment of children by the Al-Shabaab movement. We reviewed the lack of favourable conditions for the resettlement of thousands of Somali refugees and the unavailability of clear information on the presence of terrorist elements inside refugee camps.

During our visit to Africa, I was honoured to accompany the Council to Cairo. At the first-ever joint consultative meeting between the Security Council and the Council of the League of Arab States, we engaged in a frank exchange of views on such issues as the peace process in the Middle East, refugees, migration and developments in Somalia and Libya. The joint consultative meeting set an important and noteworthy precedent that could lead to the establishment of a stable mechanism for coordination and discussion between the Council and the Arab League Council of Ministers. The Arab League is an important regional organization that could play a significant role in addressing the many topics of common interest between it and the Security Council, with a view to coordinating our positions and becoming more responsive to the challenges that the Arab region is facing, foremost among which are terrorism and the way forward in the Middle East peace process.

The discussions led to a consensus of opinion on the need to coordinate the positions of the Arab League and the Security Council, particularly with regard to support for the political process in Libya and for the country's institutions, which need to fulfil their tasks so that they can win the confidence of the citizens of the country. To achieve stability, the country needs to put an end to competition among Libyan factions, resolve the impasse between the Presidential Council and the House of Representatives, and fight the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) on Libyan territory through a common military command. Also addressed were issues related to refugee crises, including the need to protect their rights and counter the Islamophobia and xenophobia facing Arab countries and the world at large.

The meeting also discussed the need to coordinate international efforts with those of countries in the Arab region to create the conditions for Israel to come to the negotiating table to reach an agreement on the basis of the 1967 borders, with all parties renouncing violence, and addressing the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people. Arab efforts and the initiatives of France and the Quartet to revive the peace process were also praised. We also discussed the challenges Somalia is facing in trying to achieve reconciliation and peace, particularly the parliamentarian and presidential elections, the expansion of the authority of the Federal Government, coordinating international and regional efforts to promote the Somali economy and the writing off Somali debt by Arab States.

Our visit concluded with a meeting with Mr. Sameh Hassan Shokry Selim, Egyptian Minister for Foreign Affairs, with whom we discussed the situation in Syria and Mr. Staffan de Mistura's efforts there, developments in the Middle East peace process, the increased attention that could be given to the French initiative and the role that the Egypt and the United States Ambassadors could play to bring the parties back to the negotiating table, as well as the importance of finding consensus on some of the main issues that would allow for the launching of negotiations, including the establishment of two States on the basis of the 1967 borders. We also discussed the situation in Libya and the need to strengthen the country's institutions and win the confidence of the Libyan people so that they can achieve their ambitions and work to coordinate the efforts to fight ISIL under a unified joint command.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

On behalf of the Council I would like express my appreciation to all members of the Security Council and the Secretariat who participated in the mission for the way in which they accomplished their important tasks.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.7697

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7697th meeting
Wednesday, 25 May 2016, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Aboulatta	(Egypt)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	China	Mr. Xu Zhongsheng
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Japan	Mr. Okamura
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mrs. Schwalger
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Senegal	Mr. Barro
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	Ukraine	Mr. Vitrenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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16-14652 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, Special Coordinator for Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mladenov.

Mr. Mladenov: Over the past decades, a broad consensus has been built around the understanding that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict can only be resolved through negotiations and on the basis of a two-State solution. That consensus is at the core of the work of the Middle East Quartet, which continues to work with the parties and the region to bring about the necessary conditions for the resumption of meaningful negotiations. The Quartet is also finalizing its first report on the impediments to the two-State solution and the way forward. In a matter of days, a number of countries and the Secretary-General will come together in Paris to reaffirm their commitment to a negotiated two-State solution and to discuss how they can constructively support both parties in achieving that goal.

All those efforts, as important as they are, cannot be divorced from the stark reality on the ground that is affecting the lives of Palestinians and Israelis alike. Despite the general downward trend in violence, on 18 April a Hamas-affiliated Palestinian teenager detonated a bomb on a bus in Jerusalem, injuring 21 people, several of them seriously. I welcome President Abbas' firm rejection of that brutal attack. It is deplorable, however, that some Palestinian factions chose instead to praise it. The United Nations is firmly convinced that there can never be, under any circumstances, justification for terror. Days later, on 27 April, a pregnant, 23-year-old Palestinian mother and her 16-year-old brother were tragically shot and killed under questionable circumstances at a checkpoint close to Jerusalem, reportedly by Israeli private security contractors, after allegedly attempting to carry out a knife attack against security forces. However, Palestinian eyewitnesses refute that claim, and the case has once again raised concerns about the need to calibrate the use of force. I note that Israeli authorities have initiated an investigation, and I encourage them to conduct it in a swift and transparent manner.

The beginning of May saw the biggest escalation in violence between Israel and Hamas since the 2014 conflict. Two tunnels were discovered, and Israel carried out 14 incursions into Gaza in order to destroy them and seek out others. In the violent exchanges that followed, militants fired 40 mortars and 8 rockets at Israel, and the Israeli Defence Forces conducted 13 air strikes on targets in the Gaza Strip. Tragically, a Palestinian woman was killed by shrapnel and several others were wounded. Those incidents of recent weeks underscore the fragility of the security dynamics on the ground, particularly the threat to the ceasefire in Gaza, which needs to be vigorously upheld by all sides if we are to avoid slipping into another devastating conflict.

Against that backdrop, the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians (AHLC) met in Brussels on 19 April and expressed concern over the damaging consequences of the current political impasse, the importance of preserving the two-State solution and the sharp decline in donor aid to the Palestinian Authority. I am encouraged that both sides agreed to work with donors during the next two years to build a more sustainable Palestinian economy by reducing the budget deficit and stimulating long-term economic growth.

As Palestinians face mounting financial and institutional challenges, negative developments continue in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Talks between Israeli and Palestinian officials on security arrangements for Area A have all but reached an impasse. I urge both sides to continue to work to bridge existing gaps. It is important to strengthen the capacity, capability and authority of the Palestinian security forces in the areas under their responsibility. Continued security coordination between both sides has played, and continues to play, a key part in reducing violence. In that context, I welcome the announcement by Israeli authorities to facilitate access through a number of West Bank checkpoints. I encourage them to make further efforts to ease movement between

communities within the West Bank, including to East Jerusalem.

I take this opportunity to note the continuation of demolitions of Palestinian structures in the West Bank. While the pace has somewhat slowed as compared to the past month, the number of structures that have been demolished across the West Bank in 2016 exceeds the total for all of 2015. At least 900 people have been displaced. Although many of the structures that have been demolished are not dwellings, the loss of water wells, solar panels and animal shelters has impacted the livelihoods of more than 2,500 people.

Allow me to turn now to Gaza, where the situation continues to be desperate and highly volatile. We in the international community have a responsibility not to fail the Palestinians in Gaza. We have a responsibility to help them recover from the physical and emotional traumas of war. We have a responsibility to assist them in rebuilding their lives and livelihoods and, ultimately, to see Gaza and the West Bank reunited and the closures lifted.

In early April, Israel suspended the private import of cement following the diversion of a substantial amount from its intended legitimate beneficiaries. After 45 days and intensive efforts by the United Nations team on the ground, that suspension has been lifted. I highly appreciate the constructive work by all authorities to successfully address the situation. All sides need to ensure that cement is used for civilian purposes only. Individuals or groups seeking to benefit from the deviation of construction materials — for corruption, for building tunnels or other reasons — must understand that they selfishly compound the suffering of their own people and sow the seeds of further violence.

Reconstruction is a lifeline for the people of Gaza. However, Gaza's chronic energy and water crisis needs to be tackled without delay. Today, residents receive at most 8 to 12 hours of electricity. On 6 May the crisis turned to tragedy, as three children from the Al-Hindi family burned to death when their house in Gaza City caught fire from a candle lit during a power cut. It is deeply regrettable that some political factions have sought to use the tragedy to trade accusations and score points, instead of uniting to address the energy crisis.

Gaza's hardships seem to have no limits. Palestinians in Gaza are growing ever more desperate as they see their prospects for living normal lives and recovering their economy blocked by Hamas's military build-up, by Israel's security measures and closures, by the lack of Palestinian unity and the insufficient fulfilment of aid pledges by donors. Recent events clearly demonstrate that the spectre of violence looms ominously over the territory. Unless radically more is done to address the chronic realities in Gaza, it is not a question of if, but rather of when, another escalation will take place. I once again encourage donors to fulfil their commitments to support Gaza's reconstruction, recovery and development.

I welcome the recent opening by Egyptian authorities of the Rafah border crossing on 11 and 12 May, during which just over 2,000 Palestinians entered and exited. I encourage Egypt to explore ways to facilitate more frequent openings of the crossing, particularly for humanitarian cases, while respecting its legitimate and pressing security concerns in the Sinai.

I want to briefly turn to an extremely worrying most recent development, that is, the announcement by Hamas of its intention to implement a number of death sentences. International law limits the application of the death penalty to the most serious crimes and pursuant to a trial and appeals process that scrupulously follows fair-trial standards. I have serious doubts as to whether capital trials in Gaza meet those standards. There are also disturbing media reports indicating that the sentences could be carried out in public. That raises even more alarms, as public executions are prohibited under international humanitarian law. What is also concerning is that the executions will be implemented without the approval of the Palestinian President, which is required under Palestinian law. Palestine is one, and Gaza and the West Bank are its two integral parts. I urge Hamas not to carry out those executions, and I call on President Abbas to establish a moratorium on the implementation of the death penalty.

As circumstances on the ground continue to deteriorate, for many lamenting the disappearance of a negotiated two-State solution has become the default narrative. And yet, according to a recent study conducted by Tel Aviv University, close to 60 per cent of the Jewish population and over 70 per cent of Palestinians remain in favour of conducting peace negotiations. The will to advance towards peace clearly exists. What remains glaringly absent is the political will and bold leadership to make genuine progress a reality. We need collectively to ask ourselves whether those Israelis and Palestinians who today support the

return to negotiations will continue to do so next year or two years from now if the prospects for peace remain out of reach. Prolonging the current impasse will sap any remaining optimism for finding a solution to the nearly 50-year occupation.

Turning briefly to other regional matters, the Council will be briefed separately on Syria this week. With regard to Lebanon, yesterday the Secretary-General and the Security Council reiterated their calls on the Lebanese political parties to build on the holding of municipal elections and to elect a President of the Republic, a post that has now remained vacant for two years.

In conclusion, let me welcome the recent statement by Egyptian President Al Sisi expressing Egypt's readiness to mediate a reconciliation between rival Palestinian factions so as to pave the way towards a lasting peace agreement with Israel. Also, his call to Israelis and Palestinians to continue the historic step towards peace taken by Israel and Egypt 37 years ago must not go unheeded — not in Israel, not in Palestine and certainly not in the rest of the Arab world. I urge Palestinian leaders in Gaza and the West Bank to take up that opportunity and to deliver, at long last, to the Palestinian people an end to the issues that divide and a commitment to strengthen the ties that bind them. I also urge Palestinian and Israeli leaders to engage, through the initiatives put forward, to bring a just, comprehensive and enduring peace to the people of Israel and Palestine.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Mladenov for his briefing.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 3.20 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.7698

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7698th meeting
Thursday, 26 May 2016, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Aboulatta	(Egypt)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	France	Mr. Stehelin
	Japan	Mr. Akahori
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mr. Taula
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Spain	Mr. De la Calle García
	Ukraine	Mr. Vitrenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Mulvein
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

The situation in Libya

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Libya

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Libya to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Fatou Bensouda, Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Prosecutor Bensouda.

Ms. Bensouda: It is a distinct honour to once again be at the Council's table to present my Office's eleventh report on the situation in Libya pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), unanimously adopted in 2011. This honour is all the more pronounced given that I address the Council under your presidency, Sir, having just returned from a most productive official visit to Cairo, where I engaged with relevant Government ministries on issues of mutual concern, including the situation in Libya, its spillover effects and the threat of Da'esh on Egypt and, more generally, on the Middle East and North Africa.

I would be remiss if I did not benefit from this occasion to reiterate my sincere appreciation for the warm hospitality extended to me and my delegation in Cairo. I assure you, Mr President, of my Office's readiness to continue our constructive dialogue with the Egyptian authorities and to follow-up on the matters so helpfully explored in Cairo. I am confident that my Office's engagement with Egypt will lead to positive results.

The past six months have witnessed significant developments in Libya's slow and difficult process towards the establishment of a unity Government. On 17 December 2015, participants in the political dialogue representing broad segments of Libyan society signed a United Nations brokered agreement on forming a Government of national unity. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon expressed the hope that the signing of the agreement will put Libya back on the path of building a democratic State based on the principles of inclusion, human rights and the rule of law.

It is equally my Office's hope that the signing of the agreement marks the beginning of the end of the long period of turmoil and conflict in Libya. Justice, accountability and the deterrent effects of the law remain critical components for achieving lasting peace in Libya and my Office stands ready to work collaboratively with the Government of National Accord in its efforts to build a secure, peaceful and prosperous Libya for all Libyan people.

To that end, I encourage the Government of National Accord to give priority to devising effective plans and strategies to address atrocity crimes and to invest in the relevant national institutions responsible for such critical work. This will demonstrate, in concrete terms, that justice and accountability constitute key Government priorities underpinning efforts to ensure peace and stability in Libya, and that the victims will have the opportunity to seek redress through the Libyan courts.

Similarly, over the same period, my Office's investigations into the Libya situation have progressed, albeit at a slower pace than we would have liked due to a lack of sufficient resources and the prevailing precarious security situation in the country. Despite these challenges, our investigations are continuing to yield positive results, in large part due to the cooperation of the Libyan Prosecutor-General's Office, from which my Office has received numerous documents pursuant to the memorandum of understanding entered into by my Office and the Libyan Government in 2013.

Notwithstanding limited resources and the inability at the present time to conduct in situ investigations in Libya, my modest Libya team has been able to pursue leads and other avenues for collecting evidence through our investigations. My Office is continuing to carefully analyse and assess the evidence in our possession and to determine whether the requisite legal standards are met to request additional arrest warrants. In short, notwithstanding the numerous challenges that we face, my Office remains firmly committed to its mandate vis-à-vis Libya and will continue to be focused and industrious in the fulfilment of that mandate.

As highlighted in my latest report, the situation in Libya requires collaboration and coordination between all relevant actors at the national, regional and international levels. The support of the Council

remains equally crucial. Success in Libya will therefore depend on the collective determination and will of all relevant actors to meaningfully contribute to the course of bringing perpetrators to justice and, by so doing, help deter the commission of future crimes.

The threat of Da'esh and other groups proclaiming allegiance to Al-Qaida remains real, and the consequences are too costly to be ignored. They include instability and the dire humanitarian situation in Libya, which in turn result in mass migration and the spread of terrorism in the country and the region. I reiterate my previous calls on all national and international law enforcement agencies that are working on Libya to contact my Office and join it in its efforts to strengthen the network of law enforcement agencies that aim to contribute to bringing an end to civilian suffering and destruction in Libya.

I remain convinced that increased cooperation between and among relevant actors, as well as coordinated investigative activities, are key to tackling national, transnational and international crimes that continue to plague Libya and to ensuring that those responsible for committing these crimes have no safe haven anywhere. In this regard, I am particularly pleased by the interest shown and efforts made thus far by national law enforcement agencies to coordinate with my Office, with each other and with the Libyan authorities. The international community has invested significant capital into restoring security in the country. While nascent, that growing network is beginning to take shape as it explores efforts to share essential information and strategies for tackling criminality in Libya. Those who finance or encourage the commission of grave crimes in Libya must understand clearly that they will be held accountable.

As the Government of National Accord assumes its duties, we recall that Libya remains under a positive legal obligation to immediately arrest and surrender Mr. Saif Al-Islam Al-Qadhafi to the International Criminal Court (ICC) — a fact noted by the Council in resolution 2238 (2015). We urge the Government of National Accord to prioritize the transfer of Mr. Al-Qadhafi to its own custody and facilitate his surrender to the Court. It is also important for the Government of National Accord to consult with the Pre-Trial Chamber on issues relating to the surrender of Mr. Al-Qadhafi and to seek assistance from the international community, as deemed appropriate, on how best to facilitate the surrender of Mr. Al-Qadhafi to the Court without further delay.

The unique factual circumstances of this case and the lack of progress also justify the adoption of complementary, exceptional and innovative measures. It bears emphasizing that Libya has submitted to the Court that "Mr. Al-Qadhafi continues to be in custody in Zintan and is presently 'unavailable' to the Libyan State". As such, as part of its ongoing efforts to enhance prospects for Mr. Al-Qadhafi's surrender, my Office recently filed a request with Pre-Trial Chamber I for an order directing the Registry to transmit the request for arrest and surrender of Mr. Al-Qadhafi directly to Mr. Al-'Ajami Al-'Atiri. Mr Al-'Atiri is the commander of the battalion that is detaining Mr. Al-Qadhafi in Zintan. The Pre-Trial Chamber is yet to issue its decision on this request. In the event that the request is granted, the Office hopes that Mr Al-'Atiri and the battalion he commands will cooperate and surrender Mr. Al-Qadhafi to the custody of the Court to be tried. Should he fail to comply, the Council should consider adopting appropriate measures to ensure compliance with the Chamber's order.

In relation to Mr. Abdullah Al-Senussi, the Office has received a copy of the written judgment of the Libyan court in relation to his case and has conducted a preliminary review of the judgement. At this time, the Office is not in possession of facts that would satisfy it that new facts have arisen that negate the basis on which Pre-Trial Chamber I found Mr. Al-Senussi's case inadmissible. The Office will continue to review its assessment if and when new relevant facts become available.

20. While the Appeals Chamber has recognized that, in the context of admissibility proceedings, the ICC is not primarily called upon to decide whether domestic proceedings violate certain requirements of human rights or domestic law, it is incumbent upon the Government of National Accord to ensure that the highest standards for investigations and prosecutions are met. In this context, I am encouraged that arrest warrants have been issued for those individuals suspected of committing crimes, including torture, in Al-Hadba prison. Follow-up actions for their arrest and prosecution must be undertaken. I will continue to encourage and follow the Libyan authorities' efforts to investigate the allegations of torture at theprison and to bring those found responsible to justice.

My Office remains concerned about ongoing civilian deaths, with reported executions by Da'esh accounting for the majority of these, although civilian deaths continue to also result from the conflict between Libya Dawn and Libyan National Army. Moreover, abductions, detentions and ill treatment in detention centres continue to be reported on all sides of the conflict.

The Mediterranean-Libya migratory route to Europe remains a popular option among refugees and migrants, who are particularly vulnerable to violence, sexual violence and ill-treatment in Libya. The detention of thousands of migrants continues to be a source of financing for many militant groups in Libya. We as the international community must take a closer look at who profits from criminal activities in Libya, and take coordinated steps to prevent further violations. This must be a priority for all who are affected by the criminal trafficking of human beings.

For its part, the Office continues to carefully evaluate how to best utilize its limited resources to maximize its impact on the present situation in Libya. While the Office is continuing its investigations into officials linked to the former reign of Muammar Al-Qadhafi, it is also focused on ongoing crimes in Libya. Despite resource constraints, the Office is assessing the potential to expand its investigations into those new crimes, including those alleged to have been committed by Da'esh and Ansar Al-Sharia. However, the Office recalls and stresses that States have the primary responsibility to investigate and prosecute their nationals who have joined the ranks of Da'esh, Ansar Al-Sharia and other militias operating in Libya.

I must reiterate that, until my team is able to carry out investigations in Libya and the issue of resources is resolved, the Office will simply be unable to advance the investigations as rapidly as desired. We are optimistic, however, that in the coming months we will be able to resume our functions in Libya and to accelerate our efforts to bring to justice those responsible for Rome Statute crimes, in coordination with key partners in and outside of Libya.

I would like to acknowledge and commend the critically important work being carried out by the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL). I had the pleasure of receiving the Head of UNSMIL and Special Representative of the Secretary General, Mr. Martin Kobler, at The Hague earlier this week, and I canvassed the many areas where our respective offices can enhance cooperation in accordance with our independent mandates. Mr. Kobler and I both agreed that accountability for grave crimes under the Rome Statute was indispensable to stability and sustainable peace in Libya. That recognition and meeting of the minds must translate into concrete positive changes on the ground. We are determined to do just that, in close collaboration with the Government of National Accord.

I greatly appreciate the efforts of all States that have engaged and cooperated with the Office in support of our investigations in Libya, including neighbouring Tunisia and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. I also encourage all States to intensify their efforts to support investigations and prosecutions of Rome Statute crimes alleged in Libya. Finally, I call upon all States that have not responded to requests for assistance to do so without further delay. State cooperation with the Office is indispensable for the success of its work in Libya and for all other situations under investigation.

Libya and the Libyan people deserve peace and stability on which to secure and build their future. They deserve the rule of law and by the law, rather than lawlessness and the current climate of perpetual insecurity and flux.

In conclusion, we must continue our work, albeit under difficult circumstances. Where we work together in an intelligent, reflective and coordinated manner, we can help make a difference in restoring stability in Libya. The Security Council and the international community must stay committed to Libya and help it emerge triumphant in the face of adversity.

Nations are not built overnight. But to last and to withstand the challenges of the twenty-first century, they must be built on strong foundations. Justice will always serve as a central pillar.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Prosecutor Bensouda for her briefing.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Council.

Mr. Shen Bo (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank Ms. Bensouda for her briefing.

China has been watching closely the developments in Libya. We support the political transition process taking place in Libya under the good offices of the United Nations. We are pleased to see that the Presidential

Council of the Libyan Government of National Accord has arrived at the capital and begun its work. That is important progress in the implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement by all parties. We hope that all parties in Libya will remain committed to a political process that is Libyan-led and open to all parties, effectively implement the Libyan Political Agreement and insist on settling differences through negotiation, with a view to the early restoration of national security and stability. That is both a precondition and the basis for achieving judicial justice in Libya.

China's position with regard to international judicial institutions remains unchanged.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome once again the presence here of Ms. Fatou Bensouda, Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, and we appreciate her detailed tenth briefing on developments in Libya, presented in accordance with resolution 1970 (2011).

As this is the first time that this issue is being taken up since Uruguay became a member of the Security Council, we would like to emphasize, as we have done at other forums, our country's full support for the role of the International Criminal Court in strengthening the rule of law at the international level by trying those responsible for the most serious violations of the rights that belong to all humankind, as set out in article 5 of the Rome Statute, wherever they are committed. In that regard, we call upon the States Members of the United Nations that have not yet joined the Rome Statute to accede to it in order to contribute to the universalization of such an important instrument in combating impunity and protecting all of the inhabitants of our planet against atrocious crimes that pose a serious threat to peace and security for all humankind.

There have been significant political developments in Libya since Ms. Bensouda's previous report to the Security Council. The Libyan Political Agreement, concluded in Morocco in December 2015, and the establishment, in March, of the Government of National Accord, whose members are today in the capital, Tripoli, are by all indications positive news in moving forward with reuniting and reconciling the country, averting further bloodshed among the population and putting an end to the institutional crisis and the military conflict, which have devastated the country for the past five years, including as well making progress towards the goal of a genuine democratic transition and the establishment of lasting peace and stability.

We trust that the new Libyan authorities will meet their commitment to provide justice to victims for the crimes committed and that they will cooperate with the Court's Prosecutor to identify perpetrators, irrespective of who they may be. In particular, we urge the new Libyan Government to make Saif Al-Islam Al-Qadhafi available to the Court and to provide Abdullah Al-Senussi and other individuals with trials that observe all guarantees of fairness.

We are concerned that the Office of the Prosecutor is forced to deal with budgetary limits in expanding its investigations into crimes that are currently taking place in Libya, in particular those being committed by such terrorist groups as Da'esh and Ansar Al-Sharia. We therefore support the Prosecutor's request for the necessary resources to that end in order that she can comply with her mandate.

In conclusion, we reiterate our commitment to the work of the Office of the Prosecutor as it investigates crimes committed in Libya. That work will undoubtedly contribute to strengthening the rule of law and the coalescence of a society in Libya that is more just and inclusive and where there is full respect for the rights and protections afforded to all inhabitants, who for many years have seen their most fundamental freedoms violated.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): I, too, would like to thank and congratulate the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) for the presentation of her eleventh report. I reiterate Senegal's support for the Rome Statute, and reaffirm our commitment to resolution 1970 (2011), which was adopted unanimously on 26 February 2011.

In referring the situation in Libya to the ICC, the Security Council intended to act quickly and effectively to combat impunity in that country. Therefore, when considering the report, the Council was pleased to note that despite the instability of the prevailing security situation in the country, in addition to limited financial resources, the Office of the Prosecutor is managing to engage with the Office of the Libyan Prosecutor General and to effectively implement the memorandum of understanding signed in November 2013 on the division of work between the Court and Libyan authorities. That is the irrefutable proof of a genuine

desire, unquestionable commitment and the effective determination of the stakeholders.

We therefore encourage the Prosecutor to carry on this work in the same vein, and we call on the Libyan judicial authorities to continue working to build a credible and effective judicial system, while also continuing efforts to share information and cooperate with the Office of the Prosecutor. It is ultimately they — the Libyan authorities — who are responsible for ensuring respect for the rule of law in their country. In that regard, the idea of forming an international contact group on issues related to justice, a contact group that would facilitate legal and material support to Libya — which had been suggested in the past — deserves more of our attention and awareness.

We also call on them to employ greater efforts to create a stable security environment that guarantees freedom, justice and respect for individual rights. Moreover, we encourage them to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to put an end to crimes and impunity in the country. During this decisive phase of its transition, the support of the international community remains essential and goes beyond the scope of cooperation between Libya and the ICC, which remains significant to this process and also to the success of the mandate entrusted to the Court by resolution 1970 (2011). As such, it is essential that the Security Council continue to support the United Nations mediation efforts led by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, Mr. Martin Kobler. The Council, convinced that there can only be a political solution to the Libyan crisis, should reiterate its call to take the action necessary for the effective and full operationalization of the Government of national accord. As the Prosecutor even notes in her report, "the ICC is, however, not a panacea for the difficulties facing Libya".

Let me also take this opportunity to recall that the ongoing support and actions of the Security Council with respect to the ICC are required not only to deliver justice and maintain international peace and security, but above all to insist once again on the relevance of a mechanism that would make it possible to evaluate more effectively the operational monitoring of situations referred by the Council to the ICC. In that vein, I would invite States to offer greater support, including through the allocation of additional resources, which is necessary for the success of the various investigations initiated by the Office of the Prosecutor.

The universal struggle against impunity justifies our continued commitment to the Court in order to save lives, restore justice for the numerous victims who seek it, and to build peaceful and inclusive societies.

Ms. Sison (United States of America): I thank the Prosecutor for briefing the Council on the efforts of the International Criminal Court to promote justice for atrocity crimes in Libya. The abuses that the Prosecutor has described today, and which have been reported separately to the Security Council and the Human Rights Council, emerge from a broader political and security crisis in Libya. In that context, the United States welcomes the positive political developments that have taken place since the Prosecutor last briefed the Security Council on the situation in Libya last year (S/PV.7549), including the arrival of the Presidency Council, led by Prime Minister Al-Sarraj in Tripoli, and the decision of the Presidency Council to have the ministers of the Government of national accord begin work in a caretaker status.

We also echo the unified message of the Joint Communiqué on Libya issued in Vienna on 16 May on behalf of 21 of Libya's partners, three regional organizations and the United Nations expressing support for the Government of National Accord and for its efforts to restore State authority and the rule of law. Uniting behind the Government of National Accord represents the only path towards the kind of national cohesion that will be needed to defeat Da'esh and other violent extremists. The need for progress in these areas has never been more urgent, and the human cost of its absence has been high.

We continue to see deeply worrying reports of abuses against civilians. In addition, the environment for those who seek to document or seek justice for those actions remains hostile as well. An investigation by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights recently reported disturbing instances of attacks against and harassment of judicial actors and court facilities, as well as human rights defenders and journalists. It also describes sexual violence against women in detention committed by one armed faction.

The fear of abduction or other abuses has left many women in Da'esh-controlled areas effectively trapped in their homes. The United States continues to condemn the abuses that Da'esh-affiliated groups have committed

in Sirte and other areas under Da'esh control, including killings of civilians and members of the security forces. As we have made clear, the United States will support the application of targeted individual sanctions against those who engage in activities that threaten Libya's peace, security and stability, and those involved in certain serious abuses or violations of human rights. But ultimately, to halt these abuses, it will be critical for the Government of national accord to restore confidence in the rule of law and reverse the collapse of Libya's domestic judicial system, which must be able to investigate and pass judgments without fear of reprisal, and which must do so in a way that respects the rights of defendants. That is critical for re-engaging Libyans in the political process and restoring trust in democratic institutions.

To promote a culture of accountability in Libya, we strongly support efforts to promote a reckoning for the abuses that were committed in the final days of the Al-Qadhafi regime, including the crimes against humanity of murder and persecution, for which Saif Al-Qadhafi is alleged to have been responsible in the course of helping carrying out a policy to attack civilians who were holding demonstrations against his father's Government. We welcome what the Prosecutor has continued to describe as a cooperative relationship between Libya's prosecutorial authorities and her Office, and we urge the Government of national accord to sustain and build upon that relationship, consistent with the Security Council's continuing call for Libya to cooperate with the Prosecutor. We also welcome the acknowledgement by Libyan authorities that Saif Al-Qadhafi is not in their custody, and we urge the Government of national accord to take appropriate steps to seek Al-Qadhafi's transfer to the International Criminal Court.

Ending impunity is only one of several critical challenges the Government of national accord faces, although success in that regard will reinforce progress in others. We appreciate the contribution that Prosecutor Bensouda and her Office have made in helping to promote accountability in Libya, which reinforces what we continue to say: that the Government and the Libyan people are far from alone as they stand at the beginning of this new chapter in Libya's history, and that the United States and many other partners will stand with them as they seek to build a just and lasting peace.

Mr. Ibrahim (Malaysia): I would like to thank Ms. Fatou Bensouda, Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, for presenting her eleventh report to the Security Council in accordance with resolution 1970 (2011).

The arrival of the members of the Presidency Council of the Government of National Accord in Tripoli in March has raised hopes for the restoration of peace and stability in the country. We are encouraged by the Presidency Council's ongoing efforts to foster inclusivity through engagement and dialogue with partners and stakeholders at the local level. That is the way forward, by building trust and acceptance among local communities for the Government of National Accord. Malaysia believes that an effective and credible Government will bolster Libya's commitment and ability to address impunity, promote and restore the rule of law and bring all the perpetrators of crimes to justice. Despite the instability and insecurity across the country, we are encouraged by the Libyan authorities' continuing efforts and commitment to complying with the relevant Security Council resolutions, including the ongoing cooperation of Libya's Prosecutor General's office. It is therefore crucial to ensure that the international community supports the Libyan authorities by providing the assistance they need.

We share the concerns expressed by Council members about the unacceptably high levels of violence in Libya, resulting in large numbers of civilian casualties and attributed mainly to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, as well as the reports of abductions, detentions and ill treatment in detention centres. The precarious situation of refugees and migrants, who are some of the most vulnerable segments of society, susceptible to violence and abuse, is equally distressing.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate how important it is that the international community provide full support to the legitimate authorities in Libya. We remain firmly supportive of the efforts of the United Nations and the international community in general to assist Libya in prevailing over its adversities, achieving a lasting political settlement and stability and restoring law and order.

Ms. Mulvein (United Kingdom): I am grateful to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) for her eleventh report and briefing to the Security Council. I would like to begin by underscoring the United Kingdom's strong support of the Court. I thank the Prosecutor and her Office for their detailed work, as set out in the latest report. We fully support her

Office's ongoing investigation efforts, which continue to play an important part in challenging impunity and ensuring accountability for those who bear the greatest responsibility for the most serious crimes in Libya.

Since the last report, there is cause for cautious optimism about Libya. Following the Libyan Political Agreement of 17 December, Prime Minister Al-Sarraj and the Presidency Council have made progress in establishing a new Government of National Accord. The recent ministerial meeting in Vienna on 17 May reaffirmed the breadth of strong international support for the Government, while highlighting the many challenges ahead. The backdrop to the long overdue political settlement in Libya has been one of almost two years of intense conflict after the collapse of the central authority and a split in the State institutions in mid-2014. The United Kingdom continues to be concerned about reports that all sides have committed serious human-rights violations and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law, some of which may amount to war crimes. The violence has substantially reduced the ability of the international community and the ICC to monitor the situation and has further weakened the criminal justice system.

The people of Libya deserve peace and security. Their aspirations will not be fully realized if there is impunity and those responsible for the horrific crimes there are not held accountable. Against that background, the United Kingdom is concerned that the difficult security situation in Libya has prevented the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC from undertaking investigative activities there. We urge all parties to implement the Libyan Political Agreement as soon as possible in order to resolve the security situation. However, we commend the continued engagement of the Libyan Prosecutor General and the Libyan representative to the Court. We urge all parties to assist the Prosecutor in her investigation and we encourage States and relevant international organizations to help the Libyan authorities in their efforts to build the rule of law in Libya.

The spread of Da'esh is a serious threat to all Libyans and the wider region. We condemn their barbaric crimes and call for the perpetrators to be held accountable. We commend the courage of the Libyans on all sides who have resisted Da'esh in Benghazi, Derna, Sirte and elsewhere. We welcome Prime Minister Al-Sarraj's call to all Libyans to unite behind the new Government against Da'esh.

We thank the Prosecutor for her briefing on the cases against Saif Al-Islam Al-Qadhafi and Abdullah Al-Senussi. We are concerned about the fact that Libya remains unable to surrender Al-Qadhafi to the Court, due to his unavailability to Libyan State authorities. The United Kingdom reiterates Libya's obligation to cooperate fully with the ICC, including by surrendering Al-Qadhafi, and notes the Prosecutor's request to transmit the arrest warrant to Mr. Al-'Atiri. We continue to be concerned about Al-Qadhafi's death sentence and about reports of torture and inhumane treatment during Al-Senussi's detention. We are pleased to hear that the Libyan authorities are taking action, and we look forward to getting information on developments in that regard, including on whether those subject to arrest warrants have been apprehended. It is crucial to ensure that the individuals alleged to be responsible do not become fugitives from justice. We also look forward to the Prosecutor's further views on Al-Senussi's trial once the full report of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya on the conduct of the trial is available.

The United Kingdom wholly endorses Prime Minister Al-Sarraj's commitment to Libya as a stable, peaceful, non-sectarian country that can contribute to stability and peace in the region. In order to do that, Libya needs the support of the international community in restoring effective Government and building united and professional armed forces that can protect civilians and institutions, and fight Da'esh, while complying with international standards. Reform of the security and justice sectors is critical to enabling Libya to facilitate the rebuilding of State institutions and a return to stability. Along with our international partners, we will continue to work with Libya to provide it with the support it needs to meet the challenges it faces.

We fully agree on the importance of cooperation between national, regional and international law-enforcement agencies.We recognize the financial and capacity constraints facing the Prosecutor's Office and its efforts to achieve efficiency savings in key areas. We are working for a budget outcome that both meets the needs of the Court and is sensitive to the resources available.

In conclusion, the governing leadership in Libya has given us room for hope. Libya has taken step after step to move from being a country at war to a country with a future brighter than many had predicted just two years ago. The ongoing work of the Prosecutor's Office will be marked as an important contribution to

ensuring that justice prevails and true stability takes root in Libya.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The situation in Libya remains extremely unstable, despite all the efforts to reunify the country. The Government of National Accord is still only preparing to become a full-fledged executive body as it awaits the approval of the legimate Parliament, as provided for in the Skhirat Agreement. The terrorist groups being pressed by the Libyan army and receiving reinforcements from outside are not surrendering. Criminal activity linked to the smuggling of people from distressed regions across the Mediterranean is flourishing. The socioeconomic and humanitarian problems are getting worse.

In other words, the foreign military intervention of 2011 has resulted in severe long-term consequences that can be overcome only by patient collaborative efforts to cooperate in developing a dialogue within Libya conducted under United Nations auspices. Staking everything on quick decisions favouring one or other of the parties could exacerbate the conflicts even further and reverse the positive beginnings that have been made.

On 23 May, the eleventh report of the ICC Prosecutor was released, but it contains no radically new information. As in the past, we get the impression that the Security Council is receiving a report not from an organ that is responsible for investigating and prosecuting criminal acts but from some sort of monitoring mission. Furthermore, as the report does not disclose the Prosecutor's response to the procedural problems that have arisen, the question becomes what the point of a dialogue with the Security Council is.

We get the impression that the current situation with regard to the ICC's consideration of the Libyan case is akin to the situation in 2011. A few days following the foreign military intervention, the Prosecutor began a preliminary investigation into Mr. Al-Qadhafi. But they did it so quickly that the evidence given was proved to be unfounded.

For example the former Prosecutor spoke of mass rape. But that was refuted by the United Nations own commission on Libya and by many non-governmental organizations. Many reliable sources doubted the other acussations made by the ICC at the time — for instance, with regard to the use of recruits to suppress demonstrations prior to the foreign military intervention. However, such refutals had no impact on the situation. ICC legal support for the foreign military intervention was implemented, and it seemed that the Court believed that the mission had been accomplished.

Over the past five years, the ICC has not brought a single new case, although it is very clear that the Libyan authorities were not the only party that could have committed acts that fall under the Rome Statute. In particular, the ICC has commenced no procedure to investigate information that has come to light on alleged crimes by the rebels. The Prosecutor has not considered the victims of NATO air strikes. And there is also proof, which was submitted to the United Nations commission investigating the Libyan situation, that non-military targets were destroyed in the air strikes. The Commission recommended that this proof be studied because it had been shown that the information provided by NATO was not reliable. Access to evidence of the consequences of the NATO attacks was open. Nevertheless the Prosecutor limited herself in 2013 to stating that she was unable to find evidence of actions that fall under the Rome Statute. However, the material that she submitted to the Security Council does not show why she came to such a conclusion.

Finally, this is not the first report of the ICC Prosecutor to show the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant is having an impact on the situation in Libya. However, no real efforts has been made to investigate these things. In addition, with regard to limited resources and the attempts bring the Libyan situation to the Security Council within a certain period of time show that in 2011 the idea of bringing the ICC investigation on Libya to the Security Council was put forward by the Prosecutor without considering what would be required to do that.

In conclusion, we would like to point out the experience of the ICC on the Libyan situation cannot be considered successful, neither in terms of implementing justice and preventing new crimes, nor in terms of supporting national reconciliation. It just enhances our doubt as to whether any new matters should be referred to the ICC.

Mr. Lucas (Angola): We thank Ms. Fatou Bensouda, Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), for the eleventh report presented pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011).

A degenerated security situation, an economic crisis, a humanitarian disaster, and an institutional and

political stalemate are the main features of the situation prevailing in Libya. By exploiting the volatile security situation, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, Ansar Al-Sharia and other violent extremist groups have expanded their operations in Libya and beyond, constituting an unprecedented threat to the entire region.

Meanwhile, the internationally recognized Government of National Accord struggles to gain legitimacy and extend its control beyond the capital city, Tripoli. The peaceful arrival and cheerful welcome to the Presidency Council in Tripoli confirms the Libyan people's strong desire for peace, security and progress and for an end to the institutional and political divisions that have been the cause of so much damage in the country. The ICC Prosecutor's report hints how the stalemate impedes the application of justice in Libya. Despite the cooperation between the ICC Office and the Office of the Libyan Prosecutor General, only an atmosphere of institutional stability and peace will permit that cooperation to bear fruit in compliance with standards set in resolution 1970 (2011).

The Libyan leadership carries the fundamental responsibility for moving the Libyan political process forward in an inclusive manner with determination, courage and good will. Angola supports and encourages all efforts of the parties involved in the political process to unite in order to swiftly overcome the grave political and security challenges that impede the full implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement.

Among the many challenges that the authorities in Libya must address, the most pressing one is to combat the expansion of extremist and terrorist groups, the proliferation of weapons and the great number of armed groups, thugs and political military factions that indiscriminately attack civilians and perpetrate horrific crimes, such as abductions, mass executions, torture and illegal detentions — actions that amount to violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

Meanwhile, the Libyan political and social context does not provide the conditions required to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of these heinous crimes, which, according to the Rome Statute that established the ICC, fall within Libya's national jurisdiction. We recognize, as the Prosecutor's report implies, that the current conditions in Libya do not allow for due legal process or fair trials. Only peace and stability will lead to the establishment of a functional legal system and effective judicial institutions. We renew our support for the United Nations and the international community in pursuing efforts with the parties involved towards the effective implementation of the Libyan National Accord for the establishment of durable peace and towards holding accountable all those responsible for atrocity crimes and human rights violations.

In closing, as the report of the Prosecutor states, Libya and the Libyan people deserve peace and stability on which to secure and build their future. They deserve the rule of law rather than lawlessness in the current climate of perpetual insecurity and flux.

Mr. Vitrenko (Ukraine): I would like to thank the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Ms. Bensouda, for her informative briefing.

Ukraine remains concerned about the continued violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of human rights in Libya. We strongly condemn the indiscriminate shelling of hospitals, abductions and assassinations of civilians, attacks on Government officials and judges and the looting of property; these are acts that are regrettably still taking place across the country. No less concerned are we about the reports of torture and other forms of violence in detention centres and strongly condemn such practices such hostage-taking and incommunicado detention, including of foreign nationals, carried out by non-State armed groups, including those claiming to belong to the legitimate authorities. We call on the Government of National Accord of Libya to fully investigate all of these and other crimes and take all the steps necessary to ensure that those found responsible are held to account.

We urge the Government of National Accord to cooperate fully with and provide any necessary assistance to the International Criminal Court (ICC), as required under Security Council resolutions 1970 (2011) and 2238 (2015). This would include seeking opportunities to resolve the issue of the surrender of Saif Al-Islam Al-Qadhafi and enabling the ICC to undertake investigative activities inside Libya.

Finally, we would like to express our support for the recommendation of the Office of the ICC Prosecutor for the creation of an international contact group on justice issues to ensure that the perpetrators of crimes occurring in or related to the situation in Libya do not enjoy impunity. Here, we cannot but fully agree with Ms. Bensouda and Mr. Kobler, Special Representative

of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, that "accountability for the grave crimes under the Rome Statue is indispensable to stability and sustainable peace in Libya".

Mr. Taula (New Zealand): The crisis in Libya over the past five years has exposed its people to grave violence and violations of their basic human rights. It has brought chronic instability and conflict, and left the people at the mercy of armed militias and violent extremists. The only way that this environment of chaos and impunity can be brought to an end is through the establishment of a legitimate, unified and effective Government.

We welcome developments towards that goal over the past six months. The conclusion of the Libyan Political Agreement, the progress in establishing a Government of National Accord (GNA) and the arrival of the Presidency Council in Tripoli represent vital steps forward. It is essential, however, that the international community, including the Council, stand ready to swiftly provide necessary support to Libya.

Only by re-establishing Government authority and strengthening core State institutions will it be possible to make progress on restoring the rule of law, protecting basic human rights and achieving justice for past violations. That is equally true of the implementation of the Security Council's referral of Libya to the International Criminal Court (ICC). Prosecutor Bensouda's report illustrates the challenges of pursuing accountability in Libya. Taking forward the ICC investigations has required patience, determination and flexibility.

The security situation continues to make it impossible for ICC staff to undertake investigations on the ground. As noted in the Prosecutor's report, Saif Al-Islam Al-Qadhafi is detained in an area described as "unavailable" to the Libyan State. In those circumstances, the Prosecutor's approach of engaging directly with those detaining him in order to secure his surrender to the ICC appears to be the only viable option. That will also involve practical engagement with and assistance from the GNA.

We are pleased that the Prosecutor and the Libyan Prosecutor General's Office have continued their close collaboration. We expect that to continue with the GNA, and look forward to engagement between the Prosector and the GNA getting under way. We note that the Prosecutor is likely to apply for additional warrants in the light of newly acquired evidence. We will defer to the Prosecutor's independent judgement on this, but we would join her and other speakers in stressing that the ICC is not a panacea for all the accountability challenges facing Libya. The ICC is a court of last resort. It was never intended to take the place of national justice systems. Rather, it is complementary to those systems, whether they be regular courts or transitional justice mechanisms.

The only effective long-term solution is to strengthen Libya's domestic capacity to maintain the rule of law and address impunity. The international community and the United Nations system need to be prepared to respond promptly to the GNA's requests for assistance in a range of areas, including the justice sector. Domestic judicial options are likely to remain constrained in the short term. We therefore support the Prosecutor's suggestion that all involved in Libyan cases develop a coordinated investigative and prosecutorial strategy, prioritizing action against those who pose a threat to Libya's stability.

Attacks on civilians, particularly by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), continue with impunity in Libya. We note that the Prosecutor is currently assessing the potential to expand ICC investigations to cover such attacks. We would welcome measures that could achieve accountability for the horrific crimes committed by ISIL and other extremist groups. We appreciate the practical challenges that this presents and look forward to the Prosecutor's future reporting on options in that regard.

Finally, when it comes to its relationship with the ICC, as in all other matters, the Security Council must follow through on its decisions. That is a basic question of credibility and means providing the ICC with all the necessary support for any referrals it makes, including in relation to findings of non-cooperation. It requires sustained engagement and political will. As an ICC State party, New Zealand is well aware of the substantial costs associated with Security Council referrals. We therefore have sympathy for the Prosecutor's call for additional resources if she is to take on more investigations in Libya, especially any not contemplated at the time of the original referral. If the Council creates new responsibilities for the ICC, then the United Nations cannot simply wash its hands of the financial implications. At the very least, the Council should not obstruct open discussions on the issue but

should defer to the General Assembly, which has the prerogative and mandate to determine funding issues.

Mr. De la Calle García (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Once again, it is an honour to have the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) present. We thank her for providing updated information that will help in the implementation of resolution 1970 (2011).

Spain wishes to reiterate its acknowledgement of the importance of the work of the Court and particularly that of its Prosecutor. We are aware that this work often takes place in conditions that are very difficult for the members of her Office. We note and welcome the update on the cases against Saif Al-Islam Al-Qadhafi and Abdullah Al-Senussi. We recall that the warrant for Saif Al-Islam Al-Qadhafi has never been executed. The current complex situation complicates Libya's ability to honour its obligations, but we hope that when the proper conditions prevail, the Government of National Accord will surrender those individuals without delay. The responsibility to cooperate fully with the Court and its Prosecutor remains in effect and now falls on the shoulders of the Government of National Accord, as the Council laid out in resolution 2259 (2015).

It is appropriate to acknowledge the dialogue that the Libyan authorities have maintained and continue to maintain with the Court, and in particular the cooperation with the Prosecutor and her Office, despite the difficulties generated by instability and insecurity. We are aware of the difficulties that the limited resources of the Prosecutor's Office place on her investigation. The costs of referrals continue to be supported only by the States parties to the Rome Statute, and the Relationship Agreement between the Court and the United Nations continues not to be implemented. It should be recalled that the first recommendation of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in his report on the investigations in Libya concern the issue of supporting the Court, in particular providing the Prosecutor's Office with the necessary resources.

The most recent report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (S/2016/452) shows an unacceptable level of violations of international humanitarian law and abuses of human rights on the part of all parties. We are very concerned that armed groups and militias continue to act unchecked and that Da'esh and its affiliates, as in Syria and Iraq, are going nowhere and determined to impose their reign of barbarism and terror.

Each and every one of the allegations of extrajudicial executions, kidnappings, disappearances, torture, attacks on human rights activists and journalists, and abuses against immigrants must be investigated and prosecuted, no matter who is responsible. Impunity simply cannot be tolerated. In that regard, we see it as a positive sign that the allegations of torture against Saif Al-Islam Al-Qadhafi and Abdullah Al-Senussi are being investigated and that a determined effort is being made to deal with those responsible.

We call not only on the Court to pursue its investigation, including of crimes committed since 2014, but also on the Libyan institutions, particularly the Prosecutor General, the tribunals and civil society, which must all participate in the process and resolve to bring the guilty parties to justice. In that regard, we cannot fail to commend all the men and women who, at the risk of their lives, continue to assist in documenting abuses and raising their voices to denounce them.

The ICC should also enjoy the Security Council's support. We recall that resolution 1970 (2011) calls on all States and international organizations to cooperate with the Court. Combating impunity is the responsibility of all. Moreover, with regard to foreign terrorist fighters enlisted in Da'esh and its affiliates, all States must honour their obligations under resolution 2238 (2015).

Libya's situation remains critical, but in recent months, since the approval of the Libyan Political Agreement, we have seen progress that allows us a degree of optimism for the first time. We recognize the work of the Special Representative and of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya. We call on all political actors in Libya to join the process being led by the Presidency Council of the Government of National Accord in a constructive manner. It is vital that we pursue our efforts to ensure the implementation of the Agreement, and in particular to strengthen the foundation of support for the Government of National Accord. Consolidating that process and re-establishing an independent legal system committed to justice is essential to rebuilding a State based on the rule of law and respect for human rights.

The end of impunity must be incorporated into the process of reconstructing the country. We must not forget that impunity is incompatible with sustainable and lasting peace. It is only recognizing the facts, dealing with those who are guilty and providing

reparations to the victims that will bring the genuine reconcilation that will allow Libyan society to look to the future.

Mr. Stehelen (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Prosecutor Bensouda for her eleventh report and her briefing. I reaffirm the full support of France for the Prosecutor and the International Criminal Court (ICC) as a whole, in particular for the successful implementation of resolution 1970 (2011), referring the situation in Libya to that high-level legal jurisdiction.

A careful review of the eleventh report highlights a number of positive developments that we welcome. Paragraph 12 of the report indicates that cooperation with the Office of the Libyan General Prosecutor is producing positive results and that these early results, including the transmission of evidence by the Libyan judiciary, coupled with targeted investigations by Ms. Bensouda's Office, have significantly enriched the inquiries and evidence in the file. Clearly, much remains to do to address the situation in Libya and, in the words of resolution 2259 (2015) itself,

> "to hold to account those responsible for violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of human rights, including those involving sexual violence" (*resolution 2259 (2015), para. 14*).

In that regard, France expresses its concern that the security situation in Libya does not allow the Prosecutor's inquiries to unfold as they should. Despite the road ahead, the progress we have made deserves our full attention, and France continue's to support Ms. Bensouda's action to that end. Having made these general remarks, we would like to emphasize three key elements.

First is support for the Libyan authorities in the field of justice and rebuilding the rule of law. The Council has affirmed that the solution to the Libyan crisis can only be political. The efforts of Special Representative of the Secretary -General Martin Kobler, and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) in general, contribute not only to the objectives of peace and stability, but also to establishing the rule of law in Libya. The signing of the Libyan Political Agreement and the formation of the Presidency Council and the Government of National Accord represent major advances. The international community must continue to give its full support to the Presidency Council and the Government of National Accord, in line with the Vienna Ministerial Conference of 16 May, in the presence of Mr. Fayyez Al-Sarraj, Prime Minister of Libya.

Secondly, it is necessary to encourage the Libyan authorities to deepen their cooperation with the ICC. France and its partners stand ready to support the efforts of the Libyan authorities to build strong State institutions guaranteeing the rule of law. We must also encourage the Government of Mr. Al-Sarraj to give every assistance to the ICC, as called for in resolution 2259 (2015). The cooperation of Libya with the ICC is crucial to ending a long period of impunity in Libya and to allowing the Court to carry out the mandate entrusted to it by the Statute and the Council. It also contributes to building a judicial system that respects the rule of law in Libya.

The Court has jurisdiction to try Mr. Saif Al-Islam Al-Qadhafi and has requested that he be returned. France reiterates that Libya must comply with the judges' decision, as the Pre-Trial Chamber recalled in its decision of 10 December 2014. France urges Libya to pursue consultations with the ICC so as to remove all obstacles to the execution of the decision to surrender Al-Qadhafi to the Court.

Regarding the case against Mr. Al-Senussi, the Prosecutor feels that she is not be able to say with certainty that new facts have emerged that could overturn the Trial Chamber's reasons for concluding the inadmissibility of the case against Mr. Al-Senussi. We note that the Prosecutor is continuing her work of gathering information and that an appeal is also under way.

Thirdly, good cooperation requires a more integrated and coherent approach to justice matters on the part of the different States and institutions concerned. France recalls the importance it attaches to the obligation of States to cooperate, as provided for in article 86 of the Rome Statute, which addresses judicial cooperation with the Court in its investigations and prosecutions of crimes under its juridication.

France also shares the Prosecutor's desire for an integrated approach at the national, regional and international levels that is firmly anchored in the principle of complementarity. As Prosecutor Bensouda recalled in her briefing, with respect to the principle of complementarity, it falls first and foremost to States to investigate and prosecute their own nationals who are implicated in the commission of crimes under the Rome Statute committed on their territory and/

or by their nationals. Such an approach can provide leverage at the national level and strengthen capacity-building, without which no stability is possible. My country is particularly committed to this approach, and the Prosecutor's conclusion that the implementation of the 2013 memorandum on the division of labour concerning investigations in Libya helped facilitated her work confirms us in that general direction. This more integrated approach to justice issues at all levels is at the heart of a rebuilt judiciary that can serve as the foundation of sustainable stability.

The terms of the Prosecutor's report and her requests to that end are futher appeals that we must pursue with resolve. France reiterates its full support in that regard.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela welcomes the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Ms. Fatou Bensouda, and thanks for her introduction of her eleventh report on the investigation on the situation in Libya, in accordance with resolution 1970 (2011). In that regard, we consider these exchanges among members of the Security Council and representatives of the Court to be relevant and timely. We reiterate to Ms. Bensouda our support in helping her management contribute to the fight against impunity in pursuit of the noble objectives of achieving full international justice.

Venezuela has been a State party to the Rome Statute since its inception in 2002, and therefore fully supports the strengthening of its institutions and the effective functioning of the International Criminal Court. In this respect, we urge those countries that are not parties to the Rome Statute to accede to it in order to achieve its universalization.

The fight against impunity for the most serious international crimes is based on international cooperation, which is an essential element in achieving the objectives of the Court and requires the commitment of all States to implementing its decisions and winning support for its work, as the Security Council has done on multiple occasions. Strengthening the international criminal justice system established after the creation of the International Criminal Court requires States parties to take no measure that may weaken its important role in combating impunity. In this context, it is necessary to maintain the independence and impartiality of the Court, free of individual interests that may undermine its credibility and the effectiveness of its operations. The consistent nature of the Court does not allow double standards or ambiguous signals in reference affairs by the Security Council.

The political instability resulting from institutional collapse of the Libyan State caused by the military intervention of NATO in 2011 — which is recognized today as having been a major error on the part of several Heads of State — has severely affected the rule of law in that Arab nation, in particular its judicial system, whose repercussions can still be felt today. Regrettably, it has left the country dismembered and prey to terrorist groups and left the people thirsting for peace and tranquillity. The absence of strong institutions and the confrontations among factions that are fighting over control of the country are impeding the functioning of the State.

In the light of this situation, we cannot say that Libya has a strong judicial system that guarantees due process and the human rights of people suspected of committing the most serious international crimes. Libya is a country that has been plunged into profound chaos and widespread violence, which has been exploited by terrorists of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham, Al-Qaida and Ansar Al-Sharia in order to expand their criminal agenda throughout the country and neighbouring nations. Those crimes should be the subject of investigations by the International Criminal Court in accordance with the Rome Statute.

The Government of Venezuela and its people support Libya's efforts to realize, build and strengthen the Government of National Accord. We commend that effort and express our firm support. We should continue to work decisively with a view to help promote and protect the human rights of Libyan citizens. In that regard, we encourage them to strengthen their cooperation with the International Criminal Court in order to facilitate the surrender of Saif Al-Islam Al-Qadhafi so that he may have an impartial trial, in accordance with due process and in compliance with resolution 1970 (2011), which facilitates the transfer of Al-Qadhafi to the Court.

The evidence of torture of Al-Qadhafi family members and former members of the Government of President Muammar Al-Qadhafi, as well as the disappearance and persecution of human rights activists, reveal the institutional weakness of the country's legal system, the absence of due process, and human rights

violations. The Libyan Government of National Accord should take all the necessary measures, under the rule of law, to guarantee the human rights of Saadi Al-Qadhafi and Abdullah Al-Senussi. Similarly, all actions that violate the human rights of the mentioned citizens and the rest of those affected should be investigated and punished.

Venezuela rejects the July 2015 decision of the Tripoli Court of Assize, by which Saif Al-Islam Al-Qadhafi was sentenced to the death in absentia, because that trial lacked the minimum due process to ensure a fair trial. The verdict has been rejected internationally by various organizations, including the Human Rights Council. For that reason, we call on the Libyan authorities of the new Government of National Accord to fully cooperate with the International Criminal Court in order to transfer Saif Al-Islam Al-Qadhafi to The Hague to stand trial in accordance with due process and with full respect for his human rights.

Paragraph 5 of resolution 1970 (2011) urges Libya and States and regional and international organizations to fully cooperate with the International Criminal Court and with its Prosecutor. That call has been affirmed in resolutions 2174 (2014), 2213 (2015) and 2238 (2015), which reiterate Libya's obligation to fully cooperate with the Court and the Office of the Prosecutor in order to surrender Saif Al-Islam Al-Qadhafi to the immediate custody of the International Criminal Court for prosecution.

We welcome the cooperation of the Office of Libya's Prosecutor General, which is reflected in the report of the Prosector of the International Criminal Court. However, we urge the authorities of that Arab nation to coordinate with the Office of the Prosecutor and to carry out the necessary consultations to address issues pertaining to the surrender of Saif Al-Islam Al-Qadhafi, who is currently being held by a militia group in Zintan.

In conclusion, we believe that, although significant efforts have been made, which resulted in the Agreement of 17 December 2015, the Government of National Accord should continue making progress in building a State grounded in the rule of law, with strong judicial institutions, through which human rights are promoted and respected, including the international principles of due process, the right to defence and the presumption of innocence, as basic legal guarantees that must be respected. Those elements are more important than ever to the process of reconciliation and national unity needed to rebuild the country and achieve peace and stability for the brotherly Libyan people.

Mr. Akahori (Japan): I would like to join the previous speakers in thanking Prosecutor Bensouda for presenting of her eleventh report on Libya.

Japan is committed to the establishment of the rule of law in the international community and is convinced of the importance of accountability. That is why Japan has consistently supported the activities of the International Criminal Court (ICC). I would like to assure the Prosecutor of Japan's full support for the work of her Office.

The Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1970 (2011) and referred the situation in Libya to the Prosecutor of the ICC. The Council decided that the Libyan authorities shall cooperate fully with the ICC and put them under the obligation to do so. It is encouraging that Libya has been cooperative with the ICC on many occasions to achieve justice in Libya. We hope that this cooperation will be enhanced. We also value and appreciate the cooperation extended to the ICC by the relevant States, such as Jordan and Tunisia. Cooperation is a vital element for the ICC to function effectively and produce a successful outcome.

They security situation in Libya continues to be unstable. It is therefore not hard to imagine the serious difficulties faced by the Office of the Prosecutor in conducting investigations. However, it is unfortunate to learn from the briefing that, despite the tireless efforts by the Prosecutor, little progress has been made on the cases. Mr. Saif Al-Islam Al-Qadhafi still remains out of the ICC's custody even though the Pre-Trial Chamber decided on December 2014 that refusing to surrender Mr. Al-Qadhafi to the ICC was an act of non-compliance by Libya. We encourage the relevant authorities of the countries concerned, including the Government of National Accord in Libya, to make further efforts to cooperate with the ICC on this matter.

We are also disturbed by reports of continuing violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law in Libya. In the light of the importance of achieving accountability in the political process, we cannot simply let such crimes and violations remain unpunished. As the Council called for in the relevant resolutions, those perpetrators must be held accountable. In that connection, we note that the Office of the Prosecutor has been assessing the crimes

allegedly committed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant/Da'esh and will possibly open an investigation. We look forward to a further update on that.

Given the challenges that Libya faces, it is of paramount importance to support the Government of National Accord and conclude the political process in a peaceful and inclusive manner. In that regard, the Government of Japan reiterates its support to Mr. Martin Kobler, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, on his efforts to conclude a United Nations-facilitated and Libyan-led political process that seeks to secure peace, stability and prosperity for the people of Libya.

Japan is fully committed to the ICC, including the Office of the Prosecutor. As a member of the Security Council, we would like to work to strengthen the relationship between the Council and the ICC.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Egypt.

At the outset, I would like to thank Ms. Fatou Bensouda, Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), for presenting her eleventh report to the Security Council pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011). The report notes several challenges and includes many important observations with regard to the functioning of the Court and the situation in Libya. I would like to make the following comments in that regard.

Firs, the Libyan Government must cooperate with the International Criminal Court and surrender Saif Al-Islam Al-Qadhafi to the Court, and all manner of assistance must be given to the Libyan Government to ensure that it is in a position to honour its commitments with regard to the Court in that regard.

Secondly, there is a need to stop all crimes of torture and inhumane acts being committed in Libya. The international community must help the Government of National Accord to design a global strategy to address the vicious crimes that have been committed in Libya. The Libyan authorities must be assisted so that they can be in a position to deliver justice to the victims. Therefore, the Government must be given the necessary tools and the Security Council's resolutions, particularly resolution 2214 (2015), must be implemented.

Egypt notes that the Office of the Prosecutor intends to broaden investigations to cover the crimes committed by Da'esh and Ansar Al-Sharia. States must assume the primary responsibility to investigate their citizens who have joined terrorist militias in Libya, including Da'esh, and to bring them to justice. The International Criminal Court must respect international norms and the principle of complementarity between the competence of national jurisdiction and that of the ICC. The Court's efforts must be seen in the context of the broader framework required by the international community to bring terrorists to justice and to ensure that there is no impunity for the horrendous crimes that they are perpetrating.

We welcome the cooperation and assistance that the Office of the Libyan Prosecutor General is giving to the Prosecutor of the ICC, particularly with regard to the submission of information and evidence, as well as the ongoing implementation of the memorandum of understanding, concluded in November 2013, on burden-sharing in investigations into the former members of the Al-Qadhafi Government and bringing them to justice.

In conclusion, we welcome the extensive measures that Ms. Fatou Bensouda, Prosecutor of the ICC, and her Office have taken to ensure justice and end impunity. We will continue our cooperation with her in this area.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Libya.

Mr. Dabbashi (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I am pleased to see you, Sir, a representative of a friendly country, presiding over the Security Council. I congratulate you and the members of your delegation on assuming the presidency. I also thank Ms. Fatou Bensouda, Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), for her important briefing today.

I take this opportunity to reaffirm Libya's full determination to ensure that the work of its national judiciary and the ICC complement one another in delivering justice and fighting impunity for crimes that fall under the Rome Statute. I again stress that the Libyan judicial authorities are determined to meet their obligations pursuant to national and international laws, despite the challenges and pressures facing them, particularly the Office of the Prosecutor General, in the absence of a law enforcement agency under Government control. The Libyan Government is currently unable to ensure the independence of the judiciary or the issuance of fair sentences when courts operate in areas not subject to its authority. However, it will strive to

ensure accountability, fight impunity and promote the rule of law, and spare no effort to investigate all crimes committed, including those of torture, abduction and any other violation of human rights. We will punish all perpetrators when circumstances allow.

Despite these factors, we must note that no Libyan Government can protect human rights or deliver justice when its judges, officials and the Office of the Prosecutor General feel that their lives are at risk because the Government has no control over the security situation and is not functioning in a safe environment. All prisons will remain beyond State control so long as the Security Council continues to marginalize the Libyan Army and to prevent its units and battalions, as well as the Libyan Security Forces, from receiving weapons despite the Libyan Army's achievements in fighting Da'esh, Al-Qaida and Ansar Al-Sharia militias.

Despite the dire need for concerted international efforts to fight Da'esh in Libya, we must take extreme care about who we are supplying weapons and equipment to. We were greatly concerned to learn that a senior military official of an important country has affirmed his country's plan to train and supply militias, which are to declare their allegiance to Mr. Fayyez Al-Sarraj, Chair of the Presidency Council of the Government of National Accord, under the pretext of fighting Da'esh. We believe that this would simply lead to keeping power split between the Army and the militias and to further chaos and instability in the country. It will prevent the Government of National Accord from having any control of the security situation.

Prosecutor Bensouda notes in her report that her Office, in line with its effort to ensure the surrender of Saif Al-Qadhafi to the ICC, filed a request to the Pre-Trial Chamber for an order directing the Registry to transmit the request for arrest and surrender of Mr. Al-Qadhafi directly to Mr. Al-'Ajami Al-'ATiri. In that regard, I wish to clarify that neither the ICC nor any other foreign entity has the right to directly address a Libyan citizen without first going through the appropriate Libyan Government channels. The Court, it if were to take such a path, would violate Libyan law and interfere in the internal affairs of Libya.

Mr. Al-'Ajami Al-'ATiri is a commander in the Libyan Army, and has no right to have any direct dealings with a foreign entity or to directly decide the fate of another Libyan. If he should attempt to do so, he would violate Libyan law and be subject to prosecution when circumstances allow. Whatever the circumstances, the decision of whether or not to surrender Saif Al-Islam Al-Qadhafi to the ICC is the sole purview of the Libyan Government and judiciary. The Government of National Accord does not currently oversee any prisons; therefore, we cannot discuss any decision about Al-Qadhafi or any other prisoner at this stage.

I would be remiss if I failed to welcome the ongoing constructive cooperation between the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC and Libya's Office of the Prosecutor. We reiterate our appreciation for all the efforts made by her Office and underscore the need to provide all the necessary resources so that it can continue and expand its investigations into crimes committed in Libya. The Prosecutor and her colleagues are always welcome in Libya to continue their investigations, once the security conditions allow for that.

There can be no justice in the absence of security, and there can be no security in the absence of the army and the police and in the presence of militias. The militias will never disappear as long as they continue to receive salaries from the State coffers — very high salaries and much more than police and army officers earn. They also receive unchecked financial support from the Ministry of Defence, while army officers and soldiers do not even receive their meagre salaries on time. I therefore emphasize that those who care about the well-being of the Libyan people and genuinely want to help them to overcome this crisis and establish justice must help us to reconstitute the Libyan army and build its capacities, as it is the only guarantor of the unity of the country and its recovery.

There is also a need to support the Government as safeguard the country's sovereignty. The international community must be resolute in adhering precisely to the Libyan Political Agreement while following a specific timetable, not overlooking any violations and rejecting any pre-emptive acts that could make this political situation even more complex. We must begin by implementing the security measures and providing weapons to the police force. That is the real role that the United Nations Assistance Mission in Libya must play at this stage. Anything short of that will be of little value — in fact, it could serve to undermine the Political Agreement, which remains the single glimmer of hope for the Libyan people, in spite of its shortcomings.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.

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Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7699th meeting
Thursday, 26 May 2016, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Aboulatta	(Egypt)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Japan	Mr. Okamura
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. Taula
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	Ukraine	Mr. Vitrenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

Peace and security in Africa

Challenges in the Sahel region

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Peace and security in Africa

Challenges in the Sahel region

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Mohammed Ibn Chambas, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel; Mr. Jean-Paul Laborde, Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and Assistant Secretary-General; Ms. Monique Barbut, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification; and Ms. Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, Coordinator of the Association des femmes peules autochtones du Tchad.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Mr. Ibn Chambas, who is joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from Niamey.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following to participate in this meeting: Mr. Pierre Buyoya, African Union High Representative for Mali and the Sahel, and Mr. Angel Losada, European Union Special Representative for the Sahel.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ibn Chambas.

Mr. Ibn Chambas: I thank the Security Council for once again giving me the opportunity to brief it on challenges to peace, security and stability in West Africa, particularly in the Sahel region. I speak from Niamey, where I have just met with President Mahamadou Issoufou as part of a tour of the five Sahel countries that are on the front line of humankind's struggle with climate change. I will be travelling to Ouagadougou right after this briefing, and will be sure to bring my hopes and the Council's concern for the impact of climate change on peace and security in that region.

West Africa and the Sahel have for some time now been faced with multifaceted challenges. From Dakar to Djibouti, climate change is one of the most important of those challenges through its impact on societies and their livelihoods, as it directly affects security, development and stability. In that context, climate change becomes a fundamental threat to human security. In the maritime domain, natural resources are underregulated and overexploited, and criminal activities and piracy are threatening security and economic activities. Erosion and rising sea levels constitute another serious threat.

Both regions experience various unresolved conflicts, ranging from the renewed insurgency in the Niger delta and deadly clashes between farmers and herders over scarce and dwindling agricultural resources, to terrorist activities in northern Mali and north-eastern Nigeria, which have spilled over to the neighbouring countries of Cameroon, Chad and the Niger. These threats go hand in hand with organized crime, trafficking and violent extremism, and are exacerbated, by recurring drought that climate change, by all accounts, has rendered more frequent and hazardous. The landlocked character of the area and poor transport links are yet another strain preventing regional trade that could provide employment and stimulate economies.

On the positive side, the fight against terrorist activities is beginning to yield tangible and encouraging results owing to strengthened cooperation between the concerned countries and the significant support of partners. In the short run, however, more effort is still needed to back the military campaign against Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin area in terms of financial and operational support for the Multinational Joint Task Force, and to provide assistance to meet the immediate humanitarian needs of displaced persons and refugees, facilitating their return to safe areas and assisting them to rebuild their livelihoods.

Further west, strengthened regional cooperation and sustained international support are also required to help the countries of the Sahel address the threat of terrorism that continues to spread beyond northern Mali and into West Africa and the Sahel. The United Nations remains committed to playing its part within the parametres of its mandate to help the region face these security challenges. In the long run, there is a growing awareness of the need to address the underlying causes of the crisis, which are underdevelopment, poor governance and attendant poverty, all of which are, at least in part, linked to climate change.

The theme of the second Regional Security Summit, held in Abuja on 14 May, "Consolidating collective efforts for regional peace and development", testified to the willingness of stakeholders to focus on the economic potential of Lake Chad to alleviate poverty and bring development to the region.

In the Sahel region, the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel guides the United Nations system's multidimensional engagement to address the root causes of instability in the region. Mitigating the impact of climate change, which features prominently under the resilience pillar of the Strategy, is the major objective of the Strategy. That has been achieved in close partnership with such actors as the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel, which supports environmental monitoring and the governance of natural resources.

The Boko Haram onslaught has galvanized attention to the devastating affects of climate change impacting the Lake Chad Basin area. To mention just one, the surface area of Lake Chad shrank from 22,000 square kilometres in 1960 to 1,700 square kilometres in 1985. Since then, it has rebounded to about 8,000 square kilometres, showing the unpredictability of external shocks and severely straining people's coping mechanisms. Lake Chad, despite its vulnerability, is blessed with a rich biodiversity that offers opportunities for fishing, agriculture and livestock farming. It directly provides livelihoods to about 2 million people, while at the same time constituting a food-exporting hub that supplies nearly 13 million people, including inhabitants of the Chadian capital, N'Djamena, and the capital of Borno state in Nigeria, Maiduguri.

The economic opportunities of the Lake led to significant migration movements in the past, the consequences of which prove challenging today. As of 2015, the Lake Chad Basin was home to up to 50 million people, whereas its resources have decreased sharply. It is anticipated that the population will again double by 2030. The importance and urgency of restoring the productive capacities of Lake Chad in order to prevent crises in the future cannot be overemphasized.

Another important area of note is the Niger River Basin area. It is an enormous resource for sustaining and improving livelihoods, as well as economic growth in the Sahel, but is now quickly dwindling as a result of the impact of extreme climate change and rainfall variability along the Niger River, a mainstay of the Niger River Basin. The Basin covers nine countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Côte D'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, the Niger and Nigeria. Seven of those nine countries are among the 20 poorest countries in the world. Up to 70 per cent of the 130 million people in the Basin area live in rural communities amid food insecurity — a situation that can only get worse, as the population is expected to double between now and 2050. Without real concerted and tangible efforts for those countries, with international support to address the acute challenges confronting the inhabitants of the Basin, the consequences in the future could be horrific when the Niger River, along its 4,200 kilometre course, begins to dry up, as can be visible in some sections already.

I would also like to mention the Great Wall initiative to combat desertification, which was conceived in 2005 by the former President of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, adopted by the African Union in 2007 and signed by participating countries in N'Djamena in 2010. The Great Green wall is another example of a long-term approach to attack the root causes of poverty and marginalization. In fact, the ongoing security deterioration due to deadly confrontations between farmers and cattle breeders in some regions of Nigeria is just another reminder of the devastating effects of desertification.

Faced with those challenges, West African and Sahel countries are at a crossroads. While the responsibility for the implementation of those plans rests with the Governments concerned, national budgets are already being put under additional strain for higher security spending, such as is the case in the Niger, where I am today. External factors like insecurity in Libya and North Africa and jihadists returning from the Middle East are challenges beyond the scope of individual Governments and require collective international action. Thankfully, support is starting to be forthcoming. The European Union has already announced that €120 million from the Trust Fund for Africa has been earmarked for security — a point that I believe Ambassador Angel Losada may confirm.

However, humanitarian needs in the Lake Chad Basin area continue to grow, with approximately 9.2 million people in need of assistance. More than 2.4 million people have been driven out of their homes due to terrorist activities, of whom 1.5 million are children. Up to 90 per cent of the displaced have found refuge with host communities, placing a heavy strain on

their resources and weakening their ability to withstand shock. Despite that dire humanitarian situation, of the $535 million requested for humanitarian assistance in the region, only 10 per cent has been received.

Two days ago, world leaders gathered around the Secretary-General in Istanbul to consider ways and means to jointly make the world hospitable for all. Among the five core responsibilities defined by the Secretary-General in his report entitled "One humanity: shared responsibility" (A/70/709), I would like in particular to highlight responsibility one — "political responsibility to prevent and end conflicts" — an responsibility four — change people's lives, from delivering aid to ending need", which very much apply to the situation in the Lake Chad Basin areas and the Sahel.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that the issues I have cited here have been thoroughly reviewed over the years. The problems have been identified, as have the set of actions to be taken to address them. A number of sound initiatives exist, and yet there is a feeling of frustration because results are not as tangible as one would wish them to be. Pooling efforts to rationalize the implementation of existing plans would go a long way in achieving our common goals.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Ibn Chambas for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Laborde.

Mr. Laborde (*spoke in French*): We are meeting here today to discuss the links between security and climate change in the Sahel. Is that a perception or a reality? Given that the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate is in charge of the fight against terrorism, I will frame my intervention from the perspective of the potential impact of climate change and global warming on it.

In the absence of concrete data or studies to establish such a correlation, it is difficult to say with confidence that such an impact exists. However, we can venture to say that climate change can be an aggravating factor leading to human insecurity and more conflicts, as recalled by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel. We also know that terrorism feeds on conflict. We have an illustration in the Sahel, which is experiencing a proliferation of terrorist groups. For years, Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, the Movement for Unity and Jihad in Western Africa, Ansar Eddine — in Mali, the Niger and Libya — and Boko Haram — in the Niger, Cameroon, Chad and Nigeria — have recruited from what I would call a bottomless pool of candidates for terrorism. It is therefore essential to prevent conflicts and address their causes in order to stem terrorism.

However, climate change cannot alone contribute to insecurity. It must be accompanied by other socio-political variables, such as poor governance, local conflicts over ownership of natural resources, economic instability and youth unemployment. A lack of training and jobs for young people leads them to find a solution to their alienation in crime, which allows them a way out, even temporarily, of poverty. Such disillusionment can lead to radicalization via actions by terrorist groups aimed primarily at young people — not just in Africa and the Sahel, but throughout the world.

In a recent study by the United Nations Development Programme study initiated by the Executive Directorate and conducted in 2015 among border populations of eight Sahel countries on their perceptions of the factors of insecurity and violent extremism, it was found that continued desertification and ecosysment degradation were seen as a form of human insecurity that pushed young people into violent extremism. I would add, "and who knows, to acts of terrorism?" The plundering of natural resources, such as the smuggling of rare woods in West Africa, leads not only to a degradation of ecosystems but may in the long term have significant consequences on the socioeconomic balance of the region by increasing the vulnerability of populations, thereby creating fertile ground for the recruitment of young people who may then be doomed to destitution by organized criminal groups and terrorist groups.

That brings me to the links between transnational organized crime and terrorism. The Security Council has addressed that issue on several occasions, in particular in resolution 1373 (2001), which establishes the foundation for the Committee's action against terrorism — our Chair is also its Chair — and that of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) on the links between transnational organized crime and terrorism. The position of the Council was very clear when it stated that it:

> "Notes with concern the close connection between international terrorism and transnational organized crime, illicit drugs, money-laundering, illegal arms trafficking, and illegal movement of

nuclear, chemical, biological and other potentially deadly materials" (*resolution 1373 (2001), para. 4*).

Those links are indeed a challenge and a source of concern to the national authorities of the Sahel, the region that is our focus today. We counted the cases that have been brought before the courts in the Sahel, and despite the low number of cases that establish those facts, the zones of convergence, from straightforward taxation of activities of criminal groups that operate in the territory under the control of terrorist groups — by which we mean taxation by terrorist groups that control territories and engage in organized crime — in all likelihood they directly implicate terrorist groups in activities arising from organized crime.

Organized criminal groups and terrorist groups may have different objectives, including those that affect the environment. Nevertheless, the pooling of their criminal techniques or networks can be mutually beneficial. That is the important point. In total, between 2013 and 2014 trafficking in drugs, weapons and tobacco reportedly yielded nearly $3.5 billion, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Given that fact, we have to underscore here that we do not know the exact percentage of that funds that go directly to terrorist groups.

The very porous borders of a region that is already unstable, the large size of the informal economy, the low amount of banking and corruption are all additional factors that, with climate change, facilitate the entrenchment of trafficking routes through the Sahel to North Africa or Europe, in particular the route of cocaine from South America, that of cannabis resin from North Africa, the trafficking of migrants towards Europe or Asia, or arms trafficking from Libya or East Africa. In the Sahel, mass migration, which is also one of the consequences of global warming, has put a lot of pressure on the border control agencies and reduced their ability to monitor the use of different forms of trafficking by those terrorist and organized crime groups.

The recent terrorist attacks in Bamako, Ouagadougou and Grand-Bassam are illustrations of the capacity for action of terrorist groups thriving in the region, especially Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and Al-Mourabitoun, which have claimed those attacks. This violence has also demonstrated that those terrorist groups can strike below the Sahel region, which is under stricter control because of the presence of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and Operation Barkhane. Their ability to bypass secure zones demonstrates once again, if it were necessary, the extreme adaptility and flexibility of these terrorist organizations, which operate on the principle of attacking where they are not expected — in the Sahel but also beyond. In other words, it must be strongly emphasized that no single country in the region is safe from the terrorist threat.

Certainly, in the area of Lake Chad, Boko Haram has suffered serious setbacks due to the mobilization of Nigerian security forces and the concerted action of countries of the region through the Multinational Joint Task Force. However, that terrorist group continues to hit civilian populations hard through the mass use of improvised bombs and suicide bombers, half of whom are women and at least 20 per cent are minors.

The situation in Libya is also a source of concern for peace and security in the Sahel. CTED is very closely following the evolution of the terrorist threat in that country, especially the rise of Da'esh and its affiliates there. I underscore, among other things, the opening of training camps of that terrorist group on Libyan territory, where some foreign terrorist fighters might be trained before returning eventually to their countries of origin to carry out terrorist acts. We also need to carefully monitor the very aggressive recruiting methods used by Da'esh with nationals of the Maghreb and Sahel countries and their possible haven in Libya. Due to underdevelopment, lack of solid State institutions and climate change, these recruits are easy pickings for Da'esh.

Libya, in which Da'esh is present in the coastal city of Sirte, could therefore serve as an expansionist platform since it is, for now, a hotbed of destabilization for the Sahel, and even for Europe, and remains the source of the proliferation of all types of weapons in the region. In that regard, many weapons convoys have been intercepted in northern Niger, near the Salvador Pass, a historical crossroads for trafficking between Libya and northern Niger. A United Nations report on arms trafficking in Libya, conducted by a Panel of Experts, stresses the alarming rate of Libyan arms proliferation in more than 12 countries, including Mali. The report underscores the presence of not only small arms and heavy weapons, but also mines and anti-aircraft defence systems. Apart from terrorist groups, that influx of weapons also promotes all types of crime in the Sahel.

Those terrorist groups are a complex threat that is constantly changing in form, scope and methods. The transnational operational capacity of these terrorist groups lies in their flexibility to adapt, innovate and quickly reorganize, while keeping their harmful power intact despite the efforts of countries of the region and the international community. The attack in Bamako on 7 March — the first since the terrorists made northern Mali their outpost some 15 years ago — was a painful reminder for us. Despite the actions of the Blue Helmets and the forces hunting them down, terrorist groups still enjoy fertile ground in the Sahel.

Since the threat is flexible, innovative and adaptable, the United Nations and its Member States must also put in place rapid, fluid and flexibility responses to find effective solutions to the threat, while making full use of international cooperation mechanisms, in accordance with the rule of law and human rights. That is why the consideration of those elements by the Council and its subsidiary bodies — CTED; the Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida,and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities; MINUSMA, the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations — is so important. As also underscored in his briefing, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa pointed out the urgent need to find political solutions to the current problems in the Sahel because terrorist groups and organized crime are slipping quietly into the lawless areas, to the greatest detriment of everyone.

Given the facts that I have just mentioned, it is essential that the countries of the region put in place a number of different measures to prevent terrorist attacks on their territory, or at least to diminish their impact so as to ensure that innocent lives are lost and no act of terrorism goes unpunished. That is the message that the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate transmitted through a series of scheduled visits to the region since April 2016.

It is clear that the United Nations system as a whole is intensifying its cooperation and assistance to address climate change and support sustainable economic and social development in order to effectively fight against terrorism and armed conflict. But those efforts to promote sustainable development cannot succeed without improving security in areas beset by conflict and terrorism, and the Sahel is one such area. That is why I outlined the preceding facts. That is also why the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, which combines the security and development approaches, seems to us to be the framework through which those problems must be addressed and, if possible, solved.

The dual approach of security and development was — very opportunely — taken up at the regional level with the establishment of the Group of Five (G-5) Sahel. The Executive Directorate has spared no effort in promoting the regional cooperation necessary in the fight against terrorism was determined to support the initiative, whereby the G-5 Sahel countries decided to work together to fight desertification, poor governance, terrorism and organized time. Moreover, my team is preparing to work with UNODC in operationalizing the security cooperation framework just established by the G-5 Sahel.

I believe more than ever that improved coordination in that area requires a decisive response to terrorism. It is also important to highlight the significant progress made in the Sahel region to address legislative and judicial matters involving terrorism, particularly the establishment of specialized training centres for magistrates. Nevertheless, the number of terrorism cases prosecuted remains low, leading to a lack of citizen confidence, which tends to exacerbate the effects of climate change. A high number of suspects remain in detention. Impunity engenders terrorism and must be ended.

I cannot reiterate enough that cooperation among countries in the region is crucial, but international cooperation, especially in criminal matters is critical, because terrorism and the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters are, by definition, criminal phenomena that are transnational par excellence. They also have an impact on natural resources. To ensure effective international cooperation, information-sharing must be strengthened among the various services involved in the combat against terrorism, and police cooperation must be strengthened in the Sahel through the G-5 by pooling resources in the area of criminal investigations, strengthening cooperation between public prosecutors and making magistrates aware of what is at stake in terms of such cooperation. To that end, I will be in Cotonou next week for a meeting with the leaders of the judicial bodies of the region and its surroundings. With French in common, we will meet on those issues, with the Sahel first and foremost in mind.

However, we must not forget the key role played by the international counter-terrorism instruments. They have precisely defined the vast majority of terrorism acts at the international level, thanks to our 19 conventions and protocols and the Council's resolutions, especially resolutions 1373 (2001) and 2178 (2014). It is critical for States to reform their legislation as soon as possible in order to criminalize the recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters and participation in terrorist acts abroad, strengthen investigations and legal tools and the system for gathering evidence.

Concerning dialogue, we have talked about its criminal aspects, but I think that dialogue is also important for States of the region. Dialogue and partnerships need in particular to be bolstered within all segments of civil society so as to make it clear that terrorism must be distinguished from all other areas of society and that terrorists must be clearly distinguished from everybody else. Tribal and religious leaders must play a significant role in that particular context.

Additionally, it is necessary to strengthen cooperation in the region to allow those countries to fully shoulder their responsibility in protecting the people in emerging conflicts. They need to know how to settle emerging conflicts, render justice, provide basic services such as education and health care throughout the entire territory, and promote a culture of peace and tolerance. There is an urgent need to develop communications and awareness-raising strategies to address the threat among those worst off and in the rural areas. That is the only way to successfully combat the ideology of terrorist groups and put an end to their recruitment activities.

Along with security stratgies. the States of the region must therefore establish prevention strategies aimed at tackling the root causes of terrorism. Climate change and mitigation measures should be considered in terms of such strategies. The support of the international community is crucial in that sense, including United Nations European Union programmes and, as the Special Representative so eloquently noted, global leadership.

I would like to state that the Executive Directorate stands ready to assist the Council and the Counter-Terrorism Committee in providing necessary assistance to the countries of the Sahel with a view to establishing an integrated counter-terrorism strategy. On that solid basis, we can work with other United Nations agencies, in particular the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF), which I recall is made up of 38 United Nations bodies and is therefore an important technical cooperation entity. It is headed by Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Feltman. Of course we work closely together, I am pleased to say, and with the Office that supports the work of the CTITF. We will inform it as soon as possible of those efforts and possible joint tasks if the Council and the Counter-Terrorism Committee deem it useful.

The Executive Directorate is also ready, if the Council deems it necessary, to further explore cause-and-effect links between climate change and terrorism and, in line with resolution 2129 (2013), to study in greater depth and with the help of more than 30 research institutes and universities the possible correlation between terrorism and climate change. I would also be pleased to include that topic as part of our programme of work.

Finally, allow me to quote Albert Camus, whose reflection in his acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1957 seems especially relevant and topical in the context of our work today:

> "Each generation undoubtedly considers that it is destined to change the world. My generation knows, nonetheless, that it will not do so. But perhaps its task is greater; it must prevent the world from falling apart."

I thank Council members for their attention and for their confidence in me reflected in their request that I brief them on this matter today.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Laborde for his briefing.

I give the floor to Ms. Monique Barbut.

Ms. Barbut (*spoke in French*): I am grateful to you, Ambassador Aboulatta, President of the Security Council, and your Spanish counterpart, Ambassador Oyarzun Marchesi, for taking the important initiative and inviting me to participate in the discussion on the Sahel region.

The Scottish-born inventor, Alexander Graham Bell, said with respect to trying to crack a difficult problem, "Sometimes we stare so long at a door that is closing that we see too late the one that is open" . Likewise, it is true that the opportunity for coordinated action in the Sahel appears to be closing quickly.

The enormous and pressing challenges make future security scenarios seem bleak. With annual population growth rates of up to nearly 4 per cent, the population is increasing beyond the region's capacity to handle it, which will have massive consequences on the region's socioeconomic development and political stability. How will we provide enough food, energy, water, income and economic opportunity for the ballooning populations?

The region's gross domestic product per capita is already very low; over 40 per cent of the population lives on less than $1.25 a day. For the bulk of the population, life is tough and will get tougher. It is a breeding ground for broken dreams, crime, radicalization and conflict. Most of the people — up to 80 per cent — currently rely on the natural resource base for survival. They eke out a living on land that provides them with everything — food, employment and medicine. Climate change will promote increased desertification, with potentially devastating consequences.

According to some predictions, today poor land management coupled with climate change could reduce agricultural production by 13 per cent in Burkina Faso and by almost 50 per cent in the Sudan. In the Sahel, 85 per cent of the land is already degraded to a certain extent. It is a vicious circle. Today, just when more land is needed, less land and consequently less water will be available.

Land is closely linked to community identity, history and culture, of course. Today, the geopolitics of the Sahel are influenced by tensions over land and water shortages that can be easily manipulated in the service of political interests and can quickly spiral out of control. Thanks to bad governance, poverty and easy access to firearms, situations can quickly turn violent, as in the case of Darfur, where it is estimated that almost 300,000 people have died since 2003. That is clearly happening again in areas around Lake Chad and the Niger, where migration is increasing the pressure on transit and target regions. As has been noted, Lake Chad is a lifeline for at least 25 million people in four countries — Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and the Niger. Tensions around natural resources, especially access to land and water, are increasing. For example, the waters of Lake Chad, which support more than 300 ethnic groups, have shrunk by 90 per cent since the 1960s. It is therefore no coincidence that the Lake Chad region is the cradle of Boko Haram and the home base for Al-Qaida in the Maghreb.

In April, I travelled to Agadez and Dirkou, two cities in the North of the Niger. Until recently, they were major tourist attractions and centres of commerce. They are now the principal transit points for migrants, through which between 150,000 and 200,000 people pass every year. There is little infrastructure to speak of. The illegal trafficking of migrants and migration-related activities are the towns' only viable economic activity. People returning from Libya tell terrible stories of their experiences farther along the route. But there are few alternatives. The question is, how can we all tolerate so much misery and despair concentrated in one place?

Land desertification and degradation are pulling the rug out from under millions of people. Those who cannot leave have a deep feeling of despair. This is creating conditions of desperation for a population that is unemployed, poor and vulnerable, including as many as 41 million young people in the Sahel region alone. More generally, and according to a recent study by the British Ministry of Defence, by 2035, almost 60 million people will have migrated to North Africa and Europe as a result of the desertification of sub-Saharan Africa. In that regard, I should point out that according to an International Organization for Migration census, 100 per cent of the illegal migrants entering Europe come from arid areas. That should make us ask ourselves some questions. All the evidence points to the fact that in the past few years we have crossed a watershed on the path towards political instability, economic migration and inter-ethnic conflict.

But to return to Alexander Graham Bell, there are open doors if we focus on the fundamentals. Given the major importance of agriculture and productive land for generating jobs and income in sub-Saharan Africa, our efforts to achieve stability and peace must focus more on land management. Natural resources cannot be a last-minute afterthought tacked on to our security strategy. We know that rural migrants generally prefer to live close to their homes. Before they get as far as leaving their own countries, more than half of all migrants move within their countries or to other neighbours. Migration to other continents is often a last resort. It means a long, hard journey under desperate conditions. Many would stay or return home if they could. Those now being repatriated from Mediterranean shores will have to cope once again with various challenges — a lack of social support networks, constant droughts and competition for access to resources between nomadic and settled

peoples. They need better and more proactive support if we are to avoid creating more instability.

All the dividends of a lasting peace in the region should involve the sustainable use of land and water. Where aid is concerned, priority should be given to developing employment and income-producing economic opportunities in rural areas. The implementation of initiatives such as the Great Green Wall and the Lake Chad Initiative is expanding, but it should be happening more quickly. In order to scale them up, we must help to get the young men and women of the Sahel working again. We should invest in decent jobs based on rehabilitation of the land in every village and community on the front lines of desertification. We estimate that an average of 5,000 villages per country is needed to kick-start a new economy and a virtuous circle. In the Sahel region, rehabilitation and sustainable management of one hectare of land costs about $250 and requires nothing apart from labour. That comes to less than $3,000 per job, per year, compared with, for example, the cost associated with paying for a migrant to stay in a camp in Italy, which is about $15,000 a year.

That land management-based approach has multiple advantages. It would be hugely beneficial to economic growth and income generation and would strengthen the resilience of communities that are vulnerable to climate change, improve food and water security and stabilize much of the region. We are not claiming that it is a magic bullet, but it would definitely be cheaper and more effective than investing in walls, wars and relief. It could at least begin to mitigate the political grievances, poverty and marginalization that are driving frustrated young Africans to take radical action. It should at the very least be part of our efforts to prevent conflict and consolidate peace. It is an open door, and it is up to us to walk through it.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Ms. Barbut for her statement.

I now give the floor to Ms. Ibrahim.

Ms. Ibrahim (*spoke in French*): I am honoured to speak to the Security Council today. I come from the Mbororo community, a nomadic and semi-nomadic people who live around Lake Chad, where I grew up. Climate change and desertification have become everyday issues for us, affecting stability and insecurity in the Sahel, because their impact is socioeconomic as well as environmental. Climate change has a direct effect on the natural resources that our countries' economies depend on, and that includes our economy. As we know, more than 70 per cent of the population of the Sahel is rural, depending directly for a living on agriculture and herding, which occupy large tracts of land and sustain millions of people. Even while many people in rural areas are leaving them to live in cities, the rural population is growing. In Chad, where I come from, agriculture constitutes more than 50 per cent of the country's wealth.

The effects of climate change on agriculture are numerous. Natural disasters, particularly drought and a lack of water, have a catastrophic impact on our agricultural resources. Our soil is impoverished, partly because periods of drought and flooding come in rapid succession, which leads to soil erosion and destruction and the loss of biodiversity. When I was young — of course, I am still young — we had a number of resources, in the form of grasses and animal and vegetable species, that have now disappeared forever. Climate change piles poverty on top of poverty every day. That has a direct impact on security because the depletion of resources reinforces conflicts among communities. I know what I am talking about.

With regard to conflicts over water resources, which have been greatly depleted around Lake Chad — as other briefers have already mentioned — land has been appropriated. For the small amount of fertile land that remains, the law of the most powerful applies. Small-scale farmers and ranchers do not have access. Access to sources of water is becoming very difficult because one must cross fields and fight to survive. Concerning conflicts between nomadic herders and farmers resulting from access to land, instead of working together as they once did, using the herds to fertilize the fields for their cultivation, everything has changed. With the shifting of the rainy seasons, the fields are occupied by the strident conflicts over nothing other than basic resources. And as we all know in the Sahel, that is a major problem for our States.

With regard to conflicts tied to migration, of which we have already spoken, poverty, intensified by climate change, is driving men and women to leave rural areas for large cities, sometimes temporarily or seasonally, during the dry season, to send money back home. Consequently, they leave millions of women and children at home, who must fight all alone to find food and survive. Others leave for longer periods of time and try to cross the seas in order to reach Europe. For them, it is not a matter of choice. They are forced to do it.

With regard to conflicts related to extremism — as we heard from the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Director — in the Lake Chad Basin, which has long liver under the threat of Boko Haram, we know how that works. Men have no choice, even though there are soldiers who are fighting against the members of that group. But we see their numbers growing every day, along with the recruitment of young people. Yet we wonder why it is easy to recruit them when they are being killed every day. They offer sums of money — $50, for example — that the potential recruit has not seen for the entire year. He is offered $500 to join, and it becomes very easy for him to make up his mind, because for a man in Africa, and especially in the Sahel, his dignity is defined by providing for his family. If he cannot provide for his family's basic needs, his dignity is left to the highest bidder, while he must assume that responsibility. He is ready to do anything amd everything. He has no choice but to sign up. We all are familiar with those threats, the Security Council must play a significant role in countering them. We know already the role that it is playing in attenuating existing conflicts, but the prevention of those acute conflicts is very important and urgent.

We also very well know that today climate change and desertification are playing key roles in the Sahel. Indeed, we must accelerate the implementation of the Paris Climate Change Agreement. That, however, is a specific mechanism that is charged with carrying it out. We also know that those rural populations are becoming increasingly vulnerable and need to adapt. They therefore need the most urgent solutions possible and must not depend on agreements that will take years to implement, for it is a matter of survival for those populations.

As we very well know, women are at forefront of the impact of all those consequences. And as for the children who will grow up without an education or future, their destiny is to follow the roads that have been paved for them in bad faith. We must avoid that and come up with the necessary measures and solutions for those people. In the simplest terms, the question is not only how to eradicate poverty, but also how to carve out a better life for them. They all want to be farmers or herders and continue to survive, but that is no no easy thing.

Today, the international community must find solutions to those crises, which are the only means to offer a future and hope to rural communities. In my community, the people do not wish to emigrate or change their way of life, but their environment is changing despite themselves and they have no control over it. We must therefore strengthen actions allowing them to preserve their way of life and culture by supporting pastoralism and family farming. We welcome the major projects in urban areas, but the small-scales projects designed to allow small communities to stay where they are even better. It is also by providing young people with prospects for the future in their communities that we will prevent them from succumbing to the pressures of terrorist groups or leaving their land for another.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Ms. Ibrahim for her briefing.

I now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): I want to first express my profound gratitude to you, Sir, and my colleague from Spain and your delegations for taking the initiative of organizing this very important meeting. Our exchange today on the topic of peace and security in Africa and challenges in the Sahel region are in line with the briefing that the Department of Political Affairs provided us on 22 March.

The Sahel region is the focal point of the cumulative negative impact of several scourges, as evidenced by the diverse perspectives of the briefers whom we have just heard, and whom I would like to warmly thank in the name of the Senegalese delegation for having shed a raw light on our discussion. The Sahel region could and should serve as a model for experimentation and integrated implementation of the major recommendations of the global processes that the international community conducted from 2015 and 2016: the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1), the Paris Agreement on climate change — which has been referred to — the World Humanitarian Summit that was just held in Istanbul, and preparations for third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, or Habitat III, which will take place in Quito in October.

In recent years, the types and number of criminal activities perpetrated in the Sahel region have continued to increase with the regular change of locations and

targets, demonstrating once again the level of flexibility and capacity of adaptability of the terrorist groups operating in the region, including Boko Haram, Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, the Mouvement pour l'unicité et le jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest and Ansar el-Dine, among others. The humanitarian consequences of those terrorist attacks are tragic, including approximately 2.8 million displaced persons, 20 million affected, and 4.5 million experiencing humanitarian insecurity, including children, and insecurity in general.

As Mr. Laborde eloquently demonstrated, there is undoubtedly an inextricable link between the scourges of terrorism, transnational organized crime and trafficking of all kinds that fundamentally undermines the security and stability of the region. The nature of that link therefore demands a holistic approach that takes into consideration the political, security, ideological and humanitarian aspects of that fight. In other words, we can win this fight only through a multisectoral, multidimensional and interregional approach that incorporates West Africa, the Sahel, Central Africa and the entire Sahelo-Saharan region and addresses the three dimensions of prevention, repression and protection. In this fight, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, which is now in operation, needs to assume a full role. We have just hear from its Head, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ibn Chambas. We also believe it important to ensure better cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union, particularly through the African Peace and Security Architecture.

It is also important to speed up the operationalization of the Multinational Joint Task Force for the fight against Boko Haram. That group undoubtedly poses one of the greatest challenges to peace and security in the region, where it acts with terrible cruelty. In order to curb the terrorist threat, the second session of the Regional Security Summit was held on 14 May in Abuja, with the aim of taking stock of the strategies and actions undertaken by the countries of the region and their partners to fight terrorism in the Sahel. In a nutshell, we sought to define an action plan to eradicate the root causes of terrorism by focusing on investments for development in the affected regions and delivery of the social needs of the most vulnerable, in particular young people, but also women, as Ms. Ibrahim mentioned, through employment, training and education.

When he spoke at that meeting in Abuja, President Macky Sall of Senegal said that "the fight against terrorism may be in vain if the funding sources of this scourge are not cut off". He called for a focus on education, training and employment, as well as on the creation of income-generating activities in order to push back ignorance and provide young people the reasons and the means to hope. President Macky Sall added:

> "It is in ignorance, poverty and social exclusion that terrorism finds fertile ground for its development by the indoctrination of some and the exploitation of others".

He concluded that otherwise we would simply be treating the symptoms and not the malady.

The challenges to peace and security in the Sahel region are multiple, but they are not unknown; numerous studies have identified them. As a country of the region, Senegal naturally faces such challenges and constraints, some of which I would wish to recall. Over and beyond the threats I noted earlier, I would point to such phenomena as climate change, with its corollaries drought, desertification, soil degradation, soil salinization and, of course, the increasing scarcity of and problems in maintaining water resources. These diverse factors seriously hinder the development and well-being of communities, making them vulnerable to various scammers who exploit their misery to satisfy their vile purposes.

To those elements, we can also add the issue of access to property and the endemic problems of locusts and grain-eating birds, all of which have a negative impact on crops, food security and already modest incomes. Cornered by persistent poverty, desperate young people in these localities have no alternative than to change their way of life, generating the phenomenon of rural exodus that increases pressure on towns confronted with overcrowding and poverty.

For others, there is a an even more perilous adventure of clandestine migration towards an El Dorado that does not exist. This exercise often consists of facing the sea aboard vessels of dubious reliability or leaving home for the great desert, abandoning in both cases their fates to the hands of smugglers who have few qualms about exploiting their vulnerability.

On a slightly different note, conflicts and tensions require entire families to leave their homes to crowd into camps for refugee camps or internally displaced persons. The challenges to peace and security in the Sahel region are numerous, but we have a good part of the

solution, notably through the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, which contains solutions to the well-defined problems that the region still faces. For example, I would cite the promotion of programmes to mitigate and adapt to climate change and the focus on building long-term resilience in the region.

A German research organization, the Planck Institute for Meteorology, has stated that by the year 2050, at the current pace of climate change, if nothing is done, all the northern region of the African continent will become uninhabitable for human beings. We can all imagine all the consequences if that were to happen for both the North and the South of Africa. The German research Max Planck Institute predicts that if nothing is done, at the current pace of climate change, by 2050 the entire northern part of the African continent will be inhabitable for the human species. We can all imagine the many consequences for northern and southern Africa.

Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I thank our four briefers today for their statements, which I believe provide a very clear view of the complexity of the Sahel. I would also like to thank those who will speak following the members of the Council.

The Sahel has on many occasions been defined, and the phrase is very familiar to us in New York, as the ground zero of global warming. In recent years, far from an improving situation, the region has continued to face a consistent increase in temperature, persistent droughts and other extreme climate phenomena such as torrential rains. Every month, the United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration announces that the temperature of the Earth has hit a new historic record — a record that always seems to exceed those of previous months. The existing projections for the Sahel region are truly alarming. At the same time, every year, thousands of hectares of arable land are lost and an ever-growing population has less and less land to farm. That formula will clearly lead to instability. Such instability has a number of root causes, ranging from extreme poverty to the fragility of State infrastructures and including violent extremism and the proliferation of illicit trafficking and terrorist groups.

The day-to-day lives of those who inhabit the Sahel region was clearly described to us by a very young — still young — lady, Ms. Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim. We know that the final solution to the challenge of climate change is not in the hands of the Security Council, nor do we claim it to be. However, that cannot be used as an excuse for the Council to ignore that reality in exercising its primary responsibility for peacekeeping and international security. Climate change is already changing the rules of the game, and to ignore the truth will just lead us to failure. That is the exact purpose of this meeting, which I increasingly value. This initiative was undertaken by us together with the Egyptian presidency, to whom we express our full gratitude for its support and for bringing this issue to safe harbour.

We proposed this meeting with three objectives in mind: first, to ensure that the commitments undertaken by the Council would not remain dead letter; secondly, to provide necessary information so that the Council can efficiently fulfil its preventative function; and, thirdly, to address the crisis in the Sahel from a holistic point of view, as the Ambassador of Senegal pointed out so well. I would like to refer briefly to each of these objectives.

With regard to fulfilling the commitments undertaken by the Council, it is important to point out that this meeting of the Council is a continuation of the path already undertaken by the United Kingdom a decade ago, which was too long ago, and it also fulfils the commitments undertaken by presidential statement S/PRST/2011/15 in 2011, under the initiative of Germany. More recently, in 2015 presidential statement S/PRST/2015/24 reaffirmed the Council's commitment to addressing the challenges for security in the Sahel, which are intrinsically related to the adverse consequences of climate change in the region. Those commitments, which we agreed to in this very Chamber, cannot simply remain declarations of intentions.

With regard to the Council's preventative function, the intention is to provide the Security Council with relevant information so it can have an overview of the situation that would make it possible to accurately diagnosis and define solutions that are more effective. In other words, the idea is to better prepare it to carry out its prevention role. Therefore, the presentations made by a number of different speakers today, who I would like to thank again for their brilliant briefings, have shown us the interrelationship between the exacerbation of desertification, as a maximum expression of the effects of climate change in this region, and security in the Sahel.

Finally, we want to ensure that an integrated and coordinated approach, which we so often clamour for in addressing a complex crisis, such as that in the Sahel, is adopted. The region resides between three great threats to security: the situation Libya; the insecurity in Mali, where the peace process is progressing too slowly; and the terrorist actions of Boko Haram in the north-east of Nigeria and in the Lake Chad Basin. These crises are fuelled by a number of factors, but there is not a single one that alone would result in a future of violence and instability in the region. It is the sum of many circumstances that is leading the Sahel from the path of peace, stability and growth. Therefore, I want to make a series of three proposals for action.

First, the Security Council needs to continue to receive information and fulfil the commitment it undertook in 2011 to analyse the different factors that, like climate change, impact peace and security in fragile regions. Having appropriate information on how these issues pose a challenge to stability in the Sahel will strengthen the Council's preventative function. In that regard, I recall the myriad debates we have held on the preventative function of the Council. Climate change will therefore become one more early-warning factor in order to be able to take action effectively when it comes time to anticipating tensions. Humanitarian crises due to food insecurity, water insecurity, massive displacement of people and uncontrolled migratory flows can be anticipated and we can implement the appropriate measures. The Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, Ms. Monique Barbut, provided us with an outstanding briefing on this.

Secondly, the Council needs to ensure that the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel pay due attention to the issues raised today, especially the destabilizing role played by climate change in the region. In order to do this in an orderly manner, it is necessary to listen to and address the needs put forth by the Sahel countries that are with us today. We have recently seen how these countries are putting in place a whole series of inter-State cooperation structures, which are trying to establish a connection, which we see very clearly, between security and development.

Finally, as was also brilliantly suggested by my friend, the Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and Assistant Secretary-General, Mr. Jean-Paul Laborde, we think it is a very good idea for the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate to analyse the impact of climate change and look at whether or not the effects of climate change exacerbate the fragility of specific peoples and make them more vulnerable to violent extremism and terrorist recruitment. Mr. Laborde has our full support in that task.

The fact that we are holding this meeting today — at which the challenges, including climate change, of a region on the Council's agenda are being considered from an integrated approach — is itself a great step forward, but we must continue working along these lines, because climate change is part of our present and it will no doubt define our future.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China wishes to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's meeting and to thank the briefers for their presentations.

The current situation in the Sahel region has been stable in general, but the spread of terrorism and serious transnational organized crime has made the security situation fragile. The region also faces multiple challenges, including uneven development. The international community should increase its input and take an integrative approach to addressing these challenges.

First, we should actively promote the settlement of regional hotspot issues. Mitigating regional hotspot issues and realizing peace and national reconciliation constitute the basis for peace and stability in the Sahel region. The international community should, on the basis of the respect for the sovereignty of the country concerned, support the Malian parties in the comprehensive implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation with a view to improving the security situation, advancing national reconciliation and promoting the peace process. The international community should pay attention to the spillover effect of external problems, such as the Libya crisis, on the Sahel region and refuse the negative impact of such factors.

Secondly, we should comprehensively advance counter-terrorism cooperation in the region. The international community should pay attention to the damage caused by terrorist activities to the stability and security of the region and increase counter-terrorism efforts in the region. We should support the States of the region in their counter-terrorism endeavour with a focus on comprehensively strengthening capacity-building

in the security area in connection with their counter-terrorism needs. The relevant United Nations counter-terrorism organs should increase their coordination and provide targeted training and technical assistance so as to comprehensively increase the ability of the countries of the region to counter terrorism and eliminate terrorist threats.

Thirdly, we should focus on the problem of underdevelopment in the region. The countries of the region should take the opportunity offered by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1) to formulate development strategies suited to their specific conditions. The international community and international financial institutions should increase their development assistance and help the countries of the region enhance their capacity for development. The relevant United Nations organizations should fully leverage their advantages and study in-depth the development needs of the countries of the region. They should promote the international community in providing targeted assistance and speed up the economic and social development of the countries of the region.

Fourthly, we should promote synergy in addressing the questions facing the Sahel region. Regional organizations, such as the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and the Group of Five Sahel, are familiar with the conditions of the countries of the region and enjoy a unique advantage in efforts to address these problems. The United Nations should strengthen coordination with these organizations and organically integrate national strategies, regional strategies and the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel to coordinate resources and form synergies in coordinating with the relevant organs in the West African region. The United Nations should listen to and heed the views of regional States and ensure a rational allocation of resources so that the Organization can more effectively respond to the challenges.

China and Africa belong to a community of common destiny and interest. Strengthening unity and cooperation with African countries has always been an important cornerstone of our foreign policy. In September last year, the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation held a summit in Johannesburg and decided to elevate its relationship to that of a partnership of strategic cooperation. We are willing to work with African countries to implement the outcome of the Johannesburg Summit and take practical actions to benefit African countries, including the Sahel countries, with a view to realizing peace, stability and prosperity on and the development of the African continent.

Mr. Wilson (United Kingdom): I wish to thank all of our briefers. We are particularly grateful to the Egyptian presidency and to Spain for convening a meeting on the threats posed to the Sahel region by climate change and terrorism. We, like those two delegations and others in the Chamber, are really concerned by the possible adverse effect that climate change could have on the peace and security of what is already a very fragile region. Add climate change to the increasing threat posed by terrorism, and you see the scale of the challenge facing these countries.

The Sahel is one of the most vulnerable regions in the world to climate change. With a 2 per cent temperature rise, scientists forecast that yields of millet and sorghum could fall by a quarter by 2018, and 80 per cent in Burkina Faso and Niger. Maize and rice yields could also fall. This is not about productivity. This is about stopping children from going hungry and stopping people from slipping back into extreme poverty. With one in nine people already going hungry across the world, we cannot afford to let it become two in nine. Sadly, that risk is becoming a reality, as our briefers set out very clearly. Since the turn of the last century, temperatures in the Sahel have already risen by 1.3 degrees Centrigrade, and rainfall has already decreased by up to 30 per cent. This has led to desertification and reduced organic soil matter. The effects of extreme weather patterns, such as El Niño, continue to test the resilience of countries in the Sahel.

As Ms. Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim has just set out for us, without access to diverse and productive livelihoods and, crucially, livelihoods that are adapted to climate change, the young people in and of the Sahel will become increasingly disenfranchised and increasingly hungry. They will get even poorer and they will become even more vulnerable to extremist messaging.

The Niger has Africa's second-highest rate of population growth and is ranked at the bottom of the United Nations Development Programme's *Human Development Index*. Competition over scarce resources and employment opportunities will increase, and long-term tensions between pastoralists and farmers will be exacerbated. The call of extremism will thrive in these conditions. That is why there needs to be a holistic and coordinated response from the international community

that focuses on long-term factors. We welcome the African Union Peace and Security Council's explicit acknowledgment of the link between climate change and peace and security in March. The Council, as Spain has already said, has also recognized that link and must continue to focus on it as a key part of its conflict-prevention role.

The United Nations has a critical part to play in supporting the countries of the region in facing up to these challenges. The United Nations, at the request of the Council, has developed an integrated strategy for the Sahel, which has at its heart building resilience against threats such as climate change and terrorism. It now also has a more effective structure in place for implementing that strategy, following the merger of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel and the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel.

The United Kingdom will play its part. This year we will provide $26 million to the Sahel region to build resilience to extreme climate events. By 2017 that figure will be $79 million. Our projects are creating new coalitions for civil society, of the private sector, Government, media, universities and meteorological offices, to build community resilience and strengthen national and international planning. This year, the United Kingdom is also providing $9 million to the Sahel region for a social protection programme. This programme will build stronger social systems that are able to respond to shocks and stresses, including climate change. By 2018, we will have provided $70 million through this programme.

We all recognize the significant threat terrorism and organized crime pose to the Sahel. Through tackling terrorism and insecurity in a holistic manner, by addressing the root causes, including the effects of climate change, we can help those who find themselves drawn to extremist groups. The United Kingdom supports the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, and we support the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and efforts through other actors, including the European Union, to that end. However, collective and coordinated action from the countries of the region will also be needed to combat terrorism. The efforts of the Group of Five Sahel — Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger — to increase their cooperation and tackle insecurity are a very welcome step forward. It is only through regional ownership and political engagement with international support that we will be able to overcome these challenges and ensure a brighter future for the people of the Sahel.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by thanking the delegations of Egypt and Spain for convening this meeting. I would like to also express my gratitude for the timely distribution of the context note on the destabilizing effects that climate change can have when they further exacerbate the traditional causes of conflict in the Sahel. I would also like to express my gratitude to Mr. Mohammed Ibn Chambas, Ms. Monique Barbut, Mr. Jean-Paul Laborde, Ms. Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, Mr. Pierre Buyoya and Mr. Angel Losada for their briefings.

Having perused the aforementioned context note, Uruguay is convinced that the international community, including the United Nations system, needs to focus its efforts on addressing the structural causes of poverty and inequity. It should do so through adequate mechanisms, such as cooperation, official development assistance, access to resources and the transfer of technology for adapting to climate change. However, it should not take a security approach, but rather one that addresses the underlying causes, understanding that climate change can pose a further challenge to the stability of societies and international security. There is no easy answer. That is why we must continue with our efforts in the context of the Climate Change Convention, the Paris Agreement, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, among others, and fulfil the commitments made.

An isolated approach positing a single possible cause of a conflict linked to socioeconomic and environmental factors might provide us with a partial and even distorted view or understanding of the dynamics that might lead a society to conflict. Adequate and fluid cooperation among the various bodies, under the terms set forth by the Charter of the United Nations, the programmes of the Organization and specialized bodies, is necessary in order to address factors that might affect security, including the extreme consequences of climate change. That does not mean that the topic of climate change needs to be on the agenda of the Security Council. We do not believe that would be relevant.

In any event, we should not underestimate the importance that the United Nations should attach to helping to prevent conflicts in the most vulnerable areas

through its peacebuilding activities and projects and programmes implemented by various United Nations agencies, the goal of which is to provide an environment that is more suitable to human development.

Uruguay is cognizant of the fact that the security situation in the Sahel deserves the special attention of the Council, especially given the terrorist activities being developed there, as well as the significant trafficking of drugs and weapons in that vast region, where many areas lie beyond effective State control. Periodically in the north of Mali, terrorist, criminal and extremist activities advance despite the progress achieved after the signing of the Peace Agreement. The civilian populations in the north continue to face a series of difficulties in accessing State institutions, and are unable to enjoy the peace dividends that stem from the agreement.

In the meantime, the number of displaced persons continues to grow, while terrorist attacks — more than 200 of which have been perpetrated since early 2015 — are increasingly effective and sophisticated and claim an ever-larger number of victims. United Nations forces on the ground have been the targets of more than 40 per cent of such attacks, against which they have trouble defending themselves given their asymmetric nature and the scarce resources and personnel available to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. In that regard, the strategic review to be formally presented next week is not just relevant but indeed urgent.

In order to address the regional problem, we need tailor-made campaigns. That is why we applaud such initiatives as the Group of Five Sahel, which has become an institutional framework for coordinating and overseeing regional cooperation. We commend the initiative of the Lake Chad Basin countries in establishing the Multinational Joint Task Force to address the problem of Boko Haram. We also appreciate the recent restructuring of the United Nations Office for West Africa and hope that it will provide us with a better overview of the situation in the Sahel and of the progress made in the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, which is relevant to a number of countries that are not within the region itself.

The 4.5 million displaced persons in the Sahel will continue to grow in number due to political instability in Libya and the terrorist threat in the region, including Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, Ansar el-Dine, Boko Haram, and the Mouvement pour l'unicité et le jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest, to mention just a few. All of this is made possible by the porous borders and lack of State control. The best way to address it is by building the institutional capacities of the States of the region, providing education, increasing the capacities of Government security forces, and providing greater access to justice and health-care centres.

Mr. Pressman (United States of America): Let me begin by thanking Special Representative Ibn Chambas, Executive Secretary Barbut, Executive Director Laborde and Ms. Ibrahim for their briefings today. I should also like to give a special thanks to Spain and Egypt for drawing the Security Council's attention to the urgent need to focus on the effects of the changing climate on security in the Sahel region.

Some Council members have pushed back on the appropriateness of having this discussion in this forum. Skepticism about the relationship between climate change and security is not new, but skepticism does not make the facts any less serious or urgent. Climate change is not just about whether glaciers remain majestic or polar bears survive. Climate change is an aggravating factor, among other political, socioeconomic and security considerations, that exacerbates underlying tensions, undermines governance, contributes to resource conflicts and negatively impacts development.

As Secretary of State John Kerry said last year, this is not about Bambi. This is about people and it is about poverty. While no conflict is caused solely by climate, to ignore the interplay between security and climate change — and there are few places where that interplay is felt more acutely than the Sahel — is to ignore fundamental realities. From Mauritania and Mali to the Lake Chad Basin to the Horn of Africa, we see the complex challenges exacerbated by climate change on peace, stability and security. Unpredictable rainfall, higher temperatures, frequent droughts and natural disasters in the Sahel have augmented existing destabilizing pressures from terrorism to trafficking, and exacerbated the problems of population displacement and weak governance. Put simply, climate change is indeed a threat multiplier.

The Boko Haram crisis in the Lake Chad Basin region starkly illustrates the interplay between climate change and security. According to a recent World Food Programme study, over the past half-century Lake Chad has receded drastically due to various environmental

pressures, which has increased competition and conflict over already scarce resources, such as arable land and water, and degraded regional food security and quality of life.

Simultaneously, Boko Haram's barbaric terrorist campaign, now entering its seventh year, has greatly exacerbated the existing food insecurity faced by the population of the Lake Chad Basin region. The Boko Haram crisis has disrupted farming and trade and cut off communities from the means they require to subsist and to survive. Today, an estimated 4.2 million people are in need of emergency food assistance in the Lake Chad Basin region and 2.6 million are displaced within Nigeria and the neighbouring countries. Meanwhile, this humanitarian crisis has been but a blip on the screen of the international community, drawing only sporadic attention and a woefully insufficient response. Indeed, Emergency Relief Coordinator Stephen O'Brien this week referred to the crisis in the Lake Chad Basin region, where poverty and desertification have been compounded by Boko Haram violence, as the world's "most neglected, underreported, underfunded and least addressed".

Military intelligence and law enforcement that protect human rights norms are vital to combating terrorism. In that regard, we applaud the important territorial advances made by the Governments of Nigeria, Chad, the Niger and Cameroon to roll back some of Boko Haram's safe havens in the Lake Chad Basin region. However, only a truly comprehensive strategy that mobilizes a broad range of stakeholders, including development and humanitarian actors, can address the conditions conducive to terrorism and the scars left in its wake. The United States is encouraged that, under Nigeria President Buhari's leadership, last week's Regional Security Summit committed to carrying out a sustained, comprehensive approach against Boko Haram that couples rights-respecting security operations with civilian efforts to restore stability and promote governance and economic development to break the cycle of violence in all countries where Boko Haram is active.

The United Nations system, including the Special Representatives for West Africa and the Sahel and Central Africa, should continue to assist the Lake Chad Basin region to implement such a comprehensive strategy. In addition, the United Nations needs to mainstream preventing violent extremism and counter-terrorism issues throughout its core work on peace and security and sustainable development so that it can help Member States, including in the broader Sahel region, to deliver in those crucial areas. We also encourage the United Nations system and its partners to make further progress towards the effective implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, which was first endorsed by the Council in 2013 and should now be re-evaluated and updated so that it can better assist Governments of the region to mitigate against compound threats, including climate change.

Let us be clear. No one is suggesting that Boko Haram was caused by climate change. It most certainly was not. But the devastation wrought by environmental degradation and challenges like severe drought and the scarcity of resources that come along with it can spark a kind of poverty and political volatility that are the oxygen of discontent and drivers of instability, if left unchecked. Recognizing that reality does not require us to be any less relentless in our pursuit of terrorists like Boko Haram or Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb. We will not be. It just allows us to be more effective in doing so.

As our discussion here today illustrates, complex and interrrelated governance, security and humanitarian challenges, exacerbated by the effects of climate change across the Sahel region, require urgent and fresh thinking and action. We encourage the leaders of the Sahel to continue to deepen their cooperation, including through the Group of Five Sahel and the Nouakchott Process, by coming to agreement on a shared vision of the region's threats and the efforts needed to address them, including improving the sustainable management of natural resources and effective, inclusive governance that both combats terrorism and addresses the conditions conducive to it.

Mr. Okamura (Japan): I would like to begin by expressing my appreciation for the initiative of Egypt and and Spain in convening this briefing. Allow me also to join others in thanking all of the four briefers.

(*spoke in French*)

I should like in particular to thank Ms. Hindour Oumarou Ibrahim for having conveyed the voice of the people of her region directly to the Security Council.

(*spoke in English*)

Japan looks forward to the acceleration of the United Nations actions in the Sahel under the leadership

of Mr. Ibn Chambas as Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel.

The Sahel faces many major challenges today. Peace and security remain fragile. The spread of terrorism from the Sahel to the rest of West Africa is worrisome. I saw the reality with my own eyes in northern Mali, where, due to the absence of State authority, the local population has no choice but to coexist with terrorists and to depend on an informal economy.

Despite all the challenges, there remains hope. Some countries are becoming resilient to the threats. Building resilient societies in the Sahel is an achievable goal. The United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS) is a valuable tool to that end. One of the key elements overarching the UNISS strategic goals is the importance of institutional capacity-building, which Japan fully supports. Indeed, Japan's commitments to institution- and capacity-building in Africa, which were made at the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD-V) have already been translated into concrete actions. That includes capacity-building support for some 2,000 people in the Sahel aimed at enhancing counter-terrorism capacity. That support was announced by Prime Minister Abe at the TICAD-V thematic session dedicated to the Sahel.

The role of the Group of Five Sahel (G-5 Sahel) in promoting the UNISS should also be commended. The G-5 Sahel has made efforts to foster regional capacities through the establishment of subregional training schools in the field of security and defence. We fully support such actions.

Countries that have more or less successfully implemented the UNISS, including through inclusive governance and social cohesion, show greater resilience to terrorism, organized crime, drought and other threats to peace and security. I was ambassador to some of those countries. In the case of Burkina Faso and Niger I was ambassador some time ago, and I witnessed those cases. In Burkina Faso local communities have been constructing more thane 1,400 reservoirs for irrigation but also in anticipation of future droughts. Their society is a model of people combining their efforts, not only to prepare for the worse, but also to reinforce the foundations of their livelihoods. In Niger, various ethnic communities are politically represented and integrated into the central Government, and that ensures effective and responsible governance throughout the country despite its vast territory and great diversity.

I believe there are two keys to creating societies that are resilient to threats. The first is ownership and the second is consideration of the local context. When Japan was implementing the technology-transfer project to counter desertification in Burkina Faso, we recognized the potential difficulty of ensuring sustainable maintenance and the practical difficulties of applying advanced technologies to local conditions. We drew two lessons from that experience. The first was that it is very important to make full use of traditional knowledge and customary procedures. The second was that in order to ensure ownership, decision-making must be promoted at the community level through the traditional system. The efforts of the United Nations and other international partners in the Sahel should be guided by the principles of ownership and consideration of the local context.

Ownership has been one of the core principles guiding the Japan-led multi-stakeholder TICAD process for more than two decades. This coming August the next TICAD will be held in Africa, at the summit level, for the first time in the African continent's history. We look forward to the active participation of countries from the Sahel region and the G-5 Sahel.

Mr. Lamek (France) (*spoke in French*): I too would like to thank the Egyptian presidency and Spain for having taken this initiative to convene this important and extremely timely debate. I also thank all the briefers for the excellent quality of their statements — Mr. Ibn Chambas, Mr. Laborde, Ms. Barbut and Ms. Ibrahim. The views that they shared with us are very helpful in guiding our work.

To a great extend I share what has already been said. I will limit my statement to three main ideas.

First, the challenges to the security and development of the Sahel are immense. The effects of climate change have particularly affected the region, and that at a time of strong demographic growth, especially as between 2015 and 2050 the population will increase from 85 million to more than 200 million inhabitants. That could be an asset, or it could be a major liability if the growth of the population is not accompanied by sufficient development, because that could produce tragedies — forced migration, political instability, insecurity and the temptation of extremism. The Sahel today therefore is at a crossroad, but there is no foregone conclusion if the Sahel countries and their partners come together to meet those challenges. Already, we

see in Mali how the mobilization of the international community can bear fruit in a situation that is much better today than in 2012.

My second thought concerns the strategy to adopt to meet the numerous challenges in the Sahel. Our approach can be effective only if it integrates that complexity. That means meeting the challenges in different areas. Here it is crucial to underscore the link made here today among climate, security and development. In the Sahel, clearly there are many problems. There is food insecurity linked to soil and land degradation, which is made worse by population growth and climate warming. In that framework, all initiatives need to be encouraged. The United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel should be quickly implemented. We also welcome the streamlining of the prevention and crisis management plans in the framework of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel.

Furthermore, regional initiatives need to be promoted. The framework of the Group of Five Sahel (G-5 Sahel), as we have underscored on numerous occasions, today seems to be very pertinent in terms of meeting challenges. Here, I would like to mention the Great Green Wall for the Sahel and the Sahara Initiative and the sustainable development projects around Lake Chad. Over and beyond that, the work of the Economic Community of West African States and the Africa Union is also to be encouraged, as is the work of the European Union, which, as members are aware, is very committed to the Sahel.

Looking at a more global dimension, the universal integrated approach to development — which is that of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) and the Paris Agreement — establishes a deadline. Its implementation, especially in the Sahel and in other large areas of vulnerability on the planet, is the major issue facing our generation. But we can change the situation in the Sahel only if we move forward determinedly and collectively with all the relevant stakeholders — the States, the United Nations, international financial institutions, civil society and businesses.

All things considered — and this will be my last point — I can confirm France's full support for the long term to meet those challenges of the Sahel. France has been involved in an unprecedented manner in terms of security to deal in the short term with the threat of terrorism and the instability that it engenders. Security in the Sahel region does not affect just the Sahel, because terrorism has also become globalized, as everyone is well aware. The French approach, with Operation Serval and then with Operation Barkhane, is based on a sustainable partnership with the armies of the Sahel with a view to making them more able to fight terrorism efficiently, in an autonomous manner and over the long term. I wish to renew, to our African and international partners, our full commitment to stand by their side in the fight against violent extremism.

Above and beyond the essential security measures, President François Hollande confirmed — at the summit on 1 December 2015 with the African Heads of State on the margins of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21) — his commitment to mobilizing the donors and the entire international community to focus on Africa's three major priorities: energy sources, the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative, and restoring Lake Chad. The French Agency for Development and the French Global Environment Facility finance or co-finance numerous development projects. President Hollande announced on that occasion that France will donate $6 billion towards African energy needs by 2020, $2 billion of which is earmarked for renewable energy.

Finally, President Hollande announced a significant increase in official development assistance — €4 billion more, starting in 2020 — which will increase our aid from €8 billion to €12 billion, demonstrating France's exceptional commitment on behalf of the most poor and the most vulnerable.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, for his briefing. Likewise, we thank Ms. Monique Barbut and Ms. Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim for their briefings, as well as Mr. Jean-Paul Laborde, Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate.

Last 25 November, the Security Council convened a meeting (see S/PV.7566) that related to the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel. At that time, the security situation in the region was described as highly unstable. Transnational organized crime, trafficking in small arms and light weapons and narcotics and the emergence

of the scourge of terrorism have left a particular mark on the region, even amid major efforts by countries and subregional organizations through various initiatives for national and regional security, the value of which we acknowledge and encourage.

The grave political and military situations that have developed in Mali and Libya have been determining factors in defining security strategies to combat the presence and expansion of terrorist groups such as Boko Haram, Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, Al Mourabitoun and Ansar Eddine, among others. Venezuela reiterates its concern to the Council over the impact of armed violence and increasing violent extremism and instability triggered by the military intervention in Libya in 2011.

The environment generated since then has exacerbated cross-border criminal activity, transforming the region into a magnet for groups that threaten social stability and State authority, primarily because of the lack of resources and social stability, thus generating a climate of violence and fear. We note the progress and will of the Governments to cooperate in combating the threat, in which the international community plays important role in preventive action and implementation of sustainable development initiatives, over and above the military solutions.

Today, almost a year after it was signed, we remain committed to the success of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali and appreciate the role played by the international partners, especially the African States and the Algerian mediation team. The best way to overcome festering conflicts such as that is by way of a political accord between the parties, prioritizing national ownership with the appropriate involvement of third parties in pursuing dialogue and harmony. Similarly, we value the work of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, while remaining aware of the difficult environment in which it is mobilized.

On the other hand, we are concerned about the presence of the Boko Haram terrorist group in the Lake Chad basin and nearby areas. We commend the efforts of Nigeria, Chad, the Niger and Cameroon, as part of the Multinational Joint Task Force, to fight that terrorist organization and hope that the threat will shortly come to an end. We also welcomed the regional security summit held in Abuja on 14 May, which brought together the political will of regional and international actors in favour of strengthening a common security strategy with a focus on preventing the spread of terrorism.

From the Venezuelan perspective, structural solutions to the problems of peace should be promoted, with a vision of sustainable development and a focus on achieving the economic and social progress of societies as a whole. Of course that is a long-term task, but it must begin by prioritizing development projects that will, in turn, impact on other sectors, including peace and security.

The particular geographical features of the region, which is predominantly a desert climate, impact on other social and economic activities, as well as access to water and food, but it is not a new phenomenon. We do not believe that there is necessarily a direct or automatic relationship between environmental change and armed conflicts; rather, conflicts are fueled by the destruction of State capacity and the interests of third parties in promoting instability, which results in increasing terrorism and crime.

We believe that the major challenges of climate change and its impact on the daily lives of millions of people, as exemplified by the El Niño phenomenon and its terrible floods and droughts, must be addressed through full compliance with the recently signed Paris Agreement and through the organs authorized for that goal by their broad and democratic character — like the General Assembly — avoiding jeopardizing the climate agenda while focusing on addressing the causes of the conflicts. While we welcome the initiative to address the challenges of peace and security affecting the Sahel, we believe that this Council is not the appropriate political forum to address environmental issues arising from climate change.

The complex humanitarian situation in the Sahel today is affecting more than 20 million people. It is the result of armed conflict; displacement; lack of access to services, water and food; diseases and natural disasters. It calls for strenghtening State capacities, fulfilling commitments made by the international community to support the region, and new commitments in favour of the most critical sectors.

Venezuela takes note of the attention focused on the region, through various national, multinational and international initiatives to improve the security situation in the Sahel, particularly States' policies to strengthen their own security sectors. We reiterate our strong support for the Group of Five Sahel — composed

of Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Chad, the Niger and Mali — the Ministerial Coordination Platform for the Sahel and the Nouakchott Process, which have actively contributed to the implementation of social and security initiatives with significant success, including in the political sphere. We call for the harmonious coordination of those policies, together with the international community, to advance the common goal of a safer region, always bearing in mind the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, particularly with regard to the sovereignty and self-determination of peoples.

The situation and geographical conditions of the Sahel and the extent of recent events have made it a particularly sensitive region, used as a channel or route of migration flows having an extraordinary human impact in the Mediterranean region. We call for the renewed impetus that motivates us to fight the human trafficking mafias to also lead to thought and consistency on the part of some international actors so as not to compromise the security situation in the African States through military interventions and armed conflicts whose characteristics have a global scope and particularly affect the most vulnerable civilian population on all continents.

Africa has been a historical victim of ambition and of the plundering of its natural resources by more powerful countries. It has paid the consequences through decades of violence and armed conflict, almost always driven from the outside. We affirm our belief that the path to peace in Africa, and in many other parts of the world, will come by ensuring that development projects and strategies, and the proper administration of policies and natural resources, are the sovereign responsibility of each people and each Government and aimed at achieving peace and sustainable development.

In conclusion, we would like to express our support to Mr. Mohammed Ibn Chambas, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel, and our full confidence in the road map laid out in the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel and in the projects of the specialized agencies and regional organizations, such as Office for West Africa of the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union, as sustainable political and economic paths towards peace in the Sahel.

Mr. Vitrenko (Ukraine): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing today's meeting, and the delegation of Spain for initiating it. We also thank all of today's briefers for their very useful presentations.

Climate change in the Sahel, along with desertification and land degradation, is one of the contributing factors stymying the development prospects of the countries of the region. It also has serious security implications, since the shrinking of the natural resources vital to economic development breeds competition and rivalry among communities and countries, spoiling relations, severing ties, escalating tensions and even provoking clashes. Global warming was already affecting the region's stability well before the adoption of the Paris climate change agreement.

My delegation therefore is convinced that a better understanding of the ways in which climate change multiplies security risks can help to manage and reduce the negative effects of environmental degradation. In that context, we believe that the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) should formulate strategic guidance on combating desertification and land degradation and ensuring the sustainable management of pasture land. To that end, we also look forward to closer cooperation and evolving synergies among UNEP, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and other multilateral environmental mechanisms. Ukraine believes that the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) should tackle the issue of protecting the environment in areas affected by armed conflict. We have already introduced a relevant UNEA draft resolution — the first of its kind — that we hope will see light quite soon.

As recent lessons have taught us, voids that are the result of underdevelopment — such as a lack of education opportunities, stagnant or declining economic activity, limited growth prospects for small businesses, weak job markets and so forth — are quickly filled by radical forces eager to exploit public discontent in their pursuit of their own agendas. In that regard, Ukraine is concerned about the threat posed by terrorist activities in the Sahel region. Terrorist groups — specifically Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab and their affiliates — have a destabilizing effect on the region's peace and security, with dire humanitarian consequences for civilians, including the most vulnerable of them — women and children.

In that context, Ukraine commends the efforts of national Governments in the Sahel to address the issue of the changing nature of the threat of terrorism and

to prioritize it at both the international and regional levels. We also welcome the outcomes of the Second Regional Security Summit, held on 14 May in Abuja on the initiative of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and aimed at strengthening the regional response to the threat posed by Boko Haram.

Along with combating terrorists through military means, it is also vital to suppress their financing and prevent them from acquiring weapons. Key elements for achieving that goal are the effective management of weapon stockpiles; the speedy disposal of small arms and light weapons during disarmament, demobilization and reintegration campaigns; the enhancement of cooperation on border controls between the countries of the region; and bringing down the transnational organized criminal networks responsible for arms trafficking in the region.

However, to ensure that the effects of counter-terrorism efforts are lasting, we should consolidate and implement a wide range of preventive measures that promote social and economic development and dialogue, respect for the rule of law and human rights, the engagement of women and young people in strategic communications, and investments in human capital, job creation and education. Such steps will help to reduce the appeal of extremist groups and support for them and will strengthen resilience against them, thereby preventing the Sahel from becoming fertile ground for the recruitment of terrorists among its tens of millions of disadvantaged people.

Mr. Taula (New Zealand): I would like to thank our briefers — Mr. Chambas, Mr. Laborde, Ms. Barbut and Ms. Ibrahim — for their insights. The challenges they outlined have implications that go far beyond the Sahel and its people. They relate to wider security issues on the Council's agenda, as well as to refugee and migration issues addressed by other bodies of the United Nations and its Member States.

One of the recurring themes of discussions on conflict prevention and resolution has been to call for the Council to be more alert to the underlying drivers of conflict. Tackling the symptoms of conflict without adequately identifying and addressing its underlying causes is a recipe for failure and continued instability. It is therefore entirely appropriate, in our view, that the Security Council should focus attention on the underlying drivers of instability in the Sahel and consider their implications for conflict in the region.

The causes of instability in the Sahel are complex and varied. They include underdevelopment and economic and political marginalization. Those factors have fed unrest and instability and have made the whole region vulnerable to encroachment by extremists and transnational criminal networks. As we have heard from our briefers, those trends are undoubtedly being magnified and exacerbated by the acute and intensifying challenges posed by droughts, irregular rainfall, desertification and other climate and ecological changes.

What we have heard today is a further manifestation of the reality highlighted during the Council's open debate on the security challenges faced by small island developing States (see S/PV.7499), convened during New Zealand's presidency in July 2015. Environmental degradation and climate change can result in major security concerns for small, vulnerable States with limited resilience and capacity to adapt, whether they are small islands or large, arid continental spaces. Most of the tools for addressing such specific climate-related challenges lie outside the Council Chamber. But it is important that our discussions of the Sahel are underpinned by a firm understanding of those manifold challenges. They must be factored into our conflict analysis and integrated into our strategies for maintaining peace and security in the region.

One of the Council's major focuses regarding the Sahel region has rightly been addressing the threat posed by terrorism. We have placed heavy emphasis on counter-terrorism measures, which play an essential role in disrupting the terrorist networks that thrive where governance is weakest. But they are not sufficient. It is also necessary to consider the economic, social and climatic drivers that facilitate terrorist recruitment. As Ms. Ibrahim mentioned, if extremist groups such as Boko Haram can offer a few hundred dollars to poor, desperate people who are facing climate-induced hardship and therefore have only grim and uncertain choices in providing for their families, we should not be surprised that many, tragically, have chosen to join them.

The multiple drivers of conflict in the Sahel also remind us that it is a mistake to simply call every person who takes up arms a terrorist. In most cases, where individuals and minority groups have rebelled out of a sense of hopelessness, peace and security will be secured only through negotiation and peace processes

designed to accommodate their grievances and achieve rehabilitation and reintegration.

New Zealand has consistently stressed the importance of various actors working together to address peace and security issues. We have, for example, been active proponents of encouraging both the African Union Peace and Security Council and our Security Council to improve their working methods and work cooperatively with subregional bodies. That principle is just as important in the Sahel region as it is elsewhere. In the Sahel, we are unfortunately faced with a situation where the problem is reasonably well-defined but the solution is lost among a surfeit of strategies. Duplicative, contradictory or competitive approaches will simply serve to dissipate our effort and diminish the impact on the ground. In that regard, we welcome the recent consolidation of United Nations regional offices to create the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel.

New Zealand stands ready to discuss creative options to further rationalize existing efforts to deliver tangible results for the Sahel region and its people.

I thank Spain and Egypt for initiating this discussion today.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): I would like to thank you, Sir, and Spain for having initiated this very interesting debate, bringing closer to the Council a reality of which we need to take account, especially as we are dealing with a region that is very sensitive.

I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, who has just delivered the point of view of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS). Mr. Ibn Chambas is in that Office, newly created to respond to the challenge, and I would like to thank him for his good briefing. Similarly, I would like to thank Mr. Jean-Paul Laborde, Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate; Ms. Monique Barbut, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification; and Ms. Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, Coordinator of the Association des femmes peules autochtones du Tchad, for bringing us so close to the realities that she is living every day in the Sahel region.

The Sahel region is confronted with huge challenges: extreme poverty, food and malnutrition crises and conflicts, youth radicalization, violent extremism, terrorism, transnational organized crime, natural disasters and the ravages of climate change.

With regard to the security situation, owing to the spike in armed conflict and violence throughout the region, Governments have been forced to spend additional resources to address security challenges, at the expense of social development. In northern Mali, which we just recently visited, the Lake Chad Basin and other areas of the Sahel region, the actions of armed groups, terrorists and transnational organized crime are having a devastating impact on civilians. As of December 2015, more than 4.5 million people were displaced, seeking refuge in already highly vulnerable communities. As violence and conflict escalate in the Lake Chad region and in northern Mali, millions of people are increasingly dependent on the generosity of their vulnerable neighbours and on humanitarian assistance.

Food insecurity, malnutrition and poverty in the Sahel region require a concerted effort by the international community in order to assist people affected by severe hunger and malnutrition. Humanitarian action in the Sahel is guided by the 2014-2016 Sahel Regional Strategic Response Plan. The three-year strategy aims at delivering coordinated and integrated life-saving assistance to people affected by emergencies, as well as at kick-starting a more tailored response to the food and nutrition crises affecting millions of people in the region.

Angola commends the humanitarian response personnel engaged in providing assistance to populations living in areas with very unsafe access, given the sheer scale and complexity of the challenge and the potential for further deterioration. While Governments of the region continue to deploy efforts with the international community to solve the humanitarian crisis, a new sense of urgency and commitment is required for a more effective response to the humanitarian threat. In that regard, Angola also welcomes the joint coordination by the countries of the region, especially the Group of Five Sahel.

The impact of climate change and natural disasters and the degradation of lands in the Sahel are other matters of extreme concern. Over the past decades, growing climate alterations and more frequent distress have pushed the Sahelian people to the brink of humanitarian disaster. Water for the region's agriculture, which is 98 per cent rain-fed, is getting scarcer, and water

availability per inhabitant has dropped by over 40 per cent over the past 20 years. Agriculture is affected by climate change, desertification and also the insecurity affecting the region, as areas suitable for agriculture are being occupied by armed groups, terrorists and transnational organized crime. That makes agricultural activities impossible, resulting in the extreme scarcity of food every year.

The shrinking of Lake Chad is a striking example of the environmental degradation in the Sahel region. Lake Chad, which previously straddled the borders of Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria, has over the last 50 years shrunk to a small percentage of its earlier size, making it more difficult for the people who depend on it for their livelihood. That forces them to dislocate in search of water and good land for agriculture, thereby causing the rise of inter-ethnic violence between the migrant people and the local communities residing in the fertile areas. Ms. Ibrahim indicated clearly for us the impact of climate change on the lands in this region that we are discussing this afternoon.

With 60 per cent of the region's population under 25 years of age, lacking education and unemployed, poverty and social exclusion provide fertile ground for disenfranchisement, grievances and radicalization. The perception that Governments neglect them easily draws youth to recruitment by extremist and terrorist groups operating in the Sahel region and beyond, making them easy prey for groups like Al-Qaida in the Islamic Sahel and Maghreb, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham in Libya, and Boko Haram in the Lake Chad region, among others.

We commend the work of UNOWAS in the Sahel, in collaboration with the United Nations agencies, international financial institutions, regional and subregional organizations, donors and partners, for its contribution towards the implementation of several projects in various Sahel member States in order to materialize the United Nations Integrated Strategy Plan for the Sahel. The international community, and the United Nations in particular, should continue assisting the Sahel countries in the fight against terrorism and to overcome the challenges affecting the region. We particularly commend the role played by France to fight terrorism in the region, with special forces operating in coordination with the national armed forces of the countries of the region itself. The efforts of the Group of Five Sahel (G-5 Sahel) countries to organize joint security operations at the borders and their decision to create a multinational task force to combat terrorism and transnational organized crime in the Sahel translate the determination of those countries to fight terrorism in the region. The decision of the G-5 Sahel is similar to that of the Multinational Joint Task Force created by the Lake Chad Basin States and Benin, who joined forces to fight Boko Haram in the Lake Chad region.

In conclusion, we call on the Sahel member States to continue to join forces to decisively address the challenges affecting the region. We urge the international community to continue to support regional efforts in the maintenance of peace and security for the development and stability in the Sahel region.

Mrs. Adnin (Malaysia): I wish to join earlier speakers in thanking all the briefers for their respective briefings, to which we have listened with much interest. We particularly appreciate the perspective of Ms. Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim in describing the harrowing difficulties endured by the people of the Sahel.

As noted by previous speakers and the briefers, an inhospitable climate, environmental degradation, food insecurity and malnutrition are some of the factors that ensure that life for the people of the Sahel is harsh and that make them extremely vulnerable. Their hardship is further compounded by violence, conflict and insecurity, which have risen at an alarming rate, particularly during the past few years. We wish to emphasize that the linkages between these so-called non-traditional threats and the peace and security situation in the region are real and have clearly resulted in increased suffering and deterioration of the quality of life for the people of the Sahel.

The wide-ranging nature of the threats faced by the Sahel and its population requires an equally comprehensive and holistic approach to reverse, or at the very least mitigate, their consequences. Therefore Malaysia believes that the discussion today is timely, and we thank the delegations of Egypt and Spain for organizing it.

Ongoing exposure to an extreme climate, coupled with erratic weather conditions causing increasingly severe and frequent flooding, as well as longer and unpredictable droughts, has resulted in crop failure and food insecurity across the Sahel. Such conditions exacerbate the region's pre-existing vulnerabilities, pushing its population to the brink of humanitarian disaster. A recent report by the United Nations

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs highlights that 4.5 million people have been newly displaced throughout the Sahel region, almost three times more than in 2012, just four years ago. The report further noted that the key drivers for such massive displacements include the adverse impacts of climate change as well as increased violence and conflict in the region. Such massive displacements exacerbate an already fragile humanitarian situation, placing both host States and those displaced at greater risk of insecurity and instability.

We share the concerns expressed regarding the rapidly deteriorating capacities of States and institutions in the region to provide essential services, including health, security, water, sanitation and education, as they struggle to cope with the massive influx of newly displaced persons. In that regard, we wish to commend the tireless work and perseverance of humanitarian actors and agencies on the ground, despite themselves being subject to persistent threats, especially from armed groups and criminal elements.

We are convinced that for the Sahel, climate change is a key driver of insecurity and instability. Drawing from the lessons of the Sahel, climate change, if left unchecked, could in fact become one of the most significant threat multipliers at the global level.

We also share the assessment that the pervading atmosphere of an impoverished existence and near hopelessness across the Sahel means that youths in the region are especially vulnerable to radicalization and recruitment by terrorists and violent extremist groups. It is imperative that this threat is addressed now, before it constitutes a bigger threat in the future. In that regard, we welcome initiatives, such as the ongoing collaboration between the European Union and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, to promote inclusive and credible deradicalization activities in the region. We also support the efforts currently being undertaken to counter terrorism and violent extremism in the region by the Group of Five Sahel (G-5 Sahel) countries, supported by France through Operation Barkhane. We note that the African Union is currently contemplating a similar effort.

We believe that the stabilization of the security situation in the Sahel is a key strategic element that must continue to be prioritized in plans and programmes at the national, regional and international levels. Therefore we welcome and support the continuing focus by the African Union (AU) on the Sahel and its emphasis on governance, security and development in its strategy for the region, mirroring the priorities of the United Nations itself. Recalling the open debate earlier this week on the future of the African Peace and Security Architecture (see S/PV.7694), we believe that there is scope for greater coordination between the AU and the United Nations on the Sahel to ensure the continuity and complementarity of the programmes and initiatives in the region.

On that note, Malaysia believes that the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) has a vital role to play in connecting the United Nations with regional and subregional actors, particularly the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and the G-5 Sahel. UNOWAS should seek to improve the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel. The need for better coordination among relevant entities should also be factored into the review of that Strategy.

The scale of the crisis faced by the Sahel region and its complexity and potential for further deterioration require our urgent attention and collective efforts. Additional resources must be mobilized not only to support the needs for development and for the consolidation of the rule of law and good governance, but also to break the cycle of crises and instability in the region. As a member of this Council, Malaysia remains committed to continue working closely with all regional and international partners and the countries in the region to address and find a comprehensive solution to the challenges in the Sahel.

Mr. Ilichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Russia pays particular attention to the developing situation in the Sahel and has consistently favoured active coordination between the United Nations and the African Union and subregional organizations to normalize it. We wish to recall that terrorism and violent extremism in the Sahel have become increasingly pertinent during recent years.

The situation has sharply deteriorated since the situation in Libya was destabilized. The security situation is still negatively affected by porous borders, which enable the trafficking in drugs, weapons and other contraband. Without making progress on a settlement in Libya, it will not be possible to find a lasting solution to terrorism in the Sahel.

We are convinced that we should currently focus on rebuilding and strengthening the counter-terrorism potential of the States of the region, as required by the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel. In that regard, we would like to thank the Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), Mr. Laborde, for his briefing. We highly value the efforts of CTED in assessing the real needs of States in terms of combating terrorism. Russia has always focused on building countries' capacities and providing bilateral support to train professionals, including law enforcement agents. Furthermore, we consider it crucial to work on implementing resolution 1624 (2005) by highlighting terrorism prevention, by making terrorism less attractive and by countering terrorist ideology and violent extremism.

With regard to the specific problem of desertification in the region, we agree that it undermines the traditional way of life and the economic potential of the countries in the region. At the same time, we believe that natural phenomena, including land and soil degradation caused by natural factors or human activities cannot a priori be regarded as a threat to international peace and security. Drought and land degradation could aggravate the situation in areas of conflict, the causes of which, in our opinion, can still be attributed to ineffective responses by the appropriate political institutions to emerging issues. The main platform for addressing desertification and land degradation is the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

When considering the problem of desertification in a cross-border context, we firmly believe there is a need to find mutually beneficial solutions based on partnership and respect for national sovereignty. We should also focus on fostering technical cooperation and training national staff on land use for countries in need. Naturally, the assistance provided should take into account the countries' specific national development needs and strategies, as well as regional aspects.

That said, we feel it is inappropriate for the Security Council to be directly involved. It does not have the relevant expertise and the necessary tools in this area. The Council's involvement could be counterproductive and lead the international community away from a search for practical solutions to combat land degradation. Not one of the briefers mentioned the role of the Security Council in combatting climate change and desertification, and that was not by chance.

In New York, real value could be added by holding substantive discussions on this topic in the framework of the specialized Second Committee of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, especially since the importance of addressing desertification and restoring degraded land in order to achieve sustainable development was emphasized in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (resolution 70/1), under Goal 15.

We believe that desertification is not the only challenge to food and economic security in the Sahel that might lead to radicalization and make it easier for terrorists to promote their ideologies and recruit adherents from among the hardest-hit segments of the population. We are convinced that the whole range of equally complex problems of the region needs to be addressed through the consistent implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel. This is a useful initiative, which has proved its worth. We have only just begun to tap into its full potential by successfully implementing projects in several areas. We hope that the merging in February of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel with the United Nations Office for West Africa will create the necessary synergy to implement this strategy.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I shall now make a statement in my national capacity.

I join members of the Council in thanking our briefers for their varied, multidimensional briefings. Undoubtedly, the Security Council is in dire need of such a comprehensive vision, and it must undertake an in-depth analysis to identify the root causes of the conflicts we are dealing with.

The valuable briefings we heard have clearly shown that the compound and interlinked nature of the challenges confronting the Sahel region creates a complicated reality that requires solutions based on a comprehensive approach, with multiple instruments that deal with all the threats with the same level of attention. In confronting these varied challenges, international, regional and national efforts must be concerted and coordinated so as to prevent criminal and terrorist armed groups from exploiting any weaknesses in the region.

Egypt believes that the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel can be the appropriate political framework for coordinating and mobilizing all efforts

to deal with the challenges effectively. The effective implementation of the Strategy will produce a qualitative shift in the reality of the region. Therefore, Egypt agreed with the Secretary-General's proposal in January of this year to merge the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel with the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) in order to maximize the logistical and human resources available and to find the means to achieve a true qualitative leap in the implementation of the Strategy, while concentrating on improving the national capacities of Sahel States.

We therefore believe that the review of the Strategy is of utmost importance in order to identify what progress has been achieved and the shortcomings in its implementation. We must identify the obstacles to implementation, both nationally and regionally. We also believe that future efforts to implement the Strategy must be sufficiently flexible to adapt to variables and escalating challenges in the African Sahel, especially the challenges related to climate change, environmental deterioration and the spread of terrorist ideologies and organized crime throughout the region.

It is important to mobilize international attention to increase awareness of these new threats in the Sahel. We must encourage international and regional partners to invest in building national and local capacities to mitigate environmental crises and to ensure more sustainable local communities. Therefore, Egypt calls for UNOWAS to ensure that future reports provide a vision for the implementation of the Strategy in the Sahel, including figures, statistics and time frames for the implementation of programmes and activities. How did the Office respond to national priorities and the needs of the peoples of the region? That would help the Security Council be aware of the level of implementation and its shortcomings.

Resolution 2282 (2016), on the review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture, adopted on 27 April, was an excellent addition to the efforts to implement the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel. The direction for the Security Council and the General Assembly in that resolution gives priority to the establishment of a comprehensive political framework for efforts to achieve sustainable peace in which political, security, economic and social dimensions are taken into account. Indeed, we believe the Peacebuilding Commission must serve as the political forum for achieving synergy among the United Nations efforts.

Egypt is prepared to cooperate with the peoples and Governments of the Sahel through the programmes implemented by the Egyptian Agency of Partnership for Development, which builds national capacities in various fields based on the principles of partnership and national ownership.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to Mr. Buyoya.

Mr. Buyoya (*spoke in French*): At the outset I wish to thank the President for this opportunity to take the floor and inform the Council of the activities of the African Union in the Sahel region. My intervention will focus on four points: first, a reminder of the data and principles that underpin the African Union strategy in the Sahel; secondly, the African Union contribution to meeting the security challenges; thirdly, meeting the challenges of governance; and fourthly, meeting development challenges.

The African Union commitment to the Sahel region dates to the Libyan crisis. In December 2011, a joint United Nations-African Union mission was despatched to the Sahel region. The idea was to examine the impact of the return of migrants on the stability of the countries of the region. A report was published by the mission and considered by experts in March 2012, in Addis Ababa. Recommendations were made to both the African Union and the United Nations. Those recommendations laid the basis of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel. Those very recommendations will also inspire the African Union strategy for the Sahel, adopted on 11 August 2014 by its Peace and Security Council.

Through the strategy, the African Union is seeking to respond to the three challenges identified in the Sahel: security, governance and development. In the area of security, we have seen that the Sahel region has experienced many problems that have been touched upon here. Those include security problems, terrorism; smuggling, including the trafficking of drugs, other products and humans; migration, rebellions and domestic conflicts linked, among other things, to competition for natural resources caused by climate change.

In the area of governance, it has been noted that the countries in the Sahel region have several problems.

In particular, they are vast countries. Their populations have been nearly abandoned to the margins of the region, particularly in areas experiencing enormous economic and environmental fragility. Those countries are fragile in terms of governance. They have access to limited resources. They do not fully control their territory. There are problems of corruption.

With respect to development, those areas are very poor. They are some of the poorest areas in Africa — indeed, in the world — and their populations are exploding. In terms of the ecosystem, the situation is very fragile. Certain areas see regular food insecurity, natural disasters, flooding and droughts.

The link between security and climate change, for example, has been established by examining the situation in northern Mali. It is common knowledge that the people who unleashed hostilities in northern Mali were Touareg Malians. They are basically Arabs who emigrated to Libya in 1973 because of a terrible drought that occurred at the time. In that case, we see that the link between insecurity and climate change in the Sahel is a reality that has been proven by the history of the region.

In the African Union strategy document, we start by defining the Sahel, because there is no common understanding of a definition of the Sahel. For us, the Sahel consists of the area straddling the southern Maghreb and northern sub-Saharan Africa, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea. It includes numerous countries, which is important to highlight. In discussing the African Union strategy, we consider the African Union in its entirety — namely, the Commission, the regional economic organizations, and a number of specialized agencies in Africa involved in development or governance. There are organizations that are dedicated to the environment, such as the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel.

The role of the African Union, in cooperation with other international community organizations, is to help countries in the region cope with the three challenges identified — security, governance and development — without assuming their national roles. If we consider the three challenges, we believe that the African Union can bring a comparative advantage, in particular in the areas of security and governance. Why is the African Union investing in security in the Sahel, whereas, normally, according to the rules of the organization, the regional economic communities deal with security? The answer to that question is very clear. It lies in the fact that the Sahel region straddles several regional economic communities, including the Economic Community of West African States, the Economic Community of Central African States, East African Monetary Union in the North and Intergovernmental Authority on Development and other organizations in eastern African.

What is the contribution of the African Union to security? As many have said, there are three hot issues involving security in the Sahel. The situation in northern Mali is well known. Unfortunately, it is not improving despite the signature of the Peace Agreement. There are still the usual terrorists movements — Ansar el-Dine, the Mouvement pour l'unicité et le jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb — who are operating there against Mali forces, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, the population, and so on. Today, we also have what I could term a new generation of terrorist groups, including the Macina Liberation Front. We see that instead of decreasing, insecurity is even extending not only southwards but throughout West Africa. Incidents in Ouagadougou and the Grand-Bassam reflect that trend.

The second cause of a lack of security lies in the countries of the Lake Chad Basin. We have heard for about 10 days now that the situation is under control, but we are aware that there is still a very high level of violence.

The third source of insecurity arises from the situation in Libya, where the situation is confused but poses a real threat to the entire Sahel region, particularly with the presence of the Islamic State there. Heretofore, young people from the Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa went to Syria and Iraq to be trained; today they do not need to travel so far. They can go to Libya.

What is the contribution being made by the African Union? From the beginning of the crisis in Mali, the African Union has been working on the liberation of northern Mali, on mediation and follow-up of the Ouagadougou Agreement and Algiers Platform, and in following up on the peace agreements. The African Union participates in the technical commission on security that monitors the ceasefire, and in the committess on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, integration and security sector reform.

The second aspect of African Union involvement is to promote regional security cooperation via the Nouakchott Process, whose emphasis is on information exchange. For example, every two months we bring together the heads of the security and information services from 11 Sahel countries. Every six months, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Defence Ministers of 11 Sahel countries come together because we find that political confidence is engendered by security cooperation. Today, it is an established fact that regional cooperation is the way forward. It yields results in the countries of the Lake Chad Basin. It yielded results following the Grand-Bassam attacks. Four countries of the region joined forces to investigate the networks of the perpetrators of those attacks, and the results are tangible. We must therefore continue along that path. I think that is what emerged also from the Abuja Summit recently.

Another dimension of African Union involvement the assessement, undertaken at the request of the Heads of State of the countries in the region, of the situation in northern Mali and to see how the African Union and the countries of the region can come together to strengthen the fight against terrorism. In that regard, an the report of the assessment mission will soon be issued.

My next point involves the contribution of the African Union to governance and the political realm. In Mali, the African Union was at the very heart of the peace process since Ouagadougou and Algiers, and is today involved in the implementation of the Peace Agreement. The African Union is chairing the subcommittee of the follow-up committee addressing political and institutional matters. We know that this problem is at the heart of what we could term the implementation of the Peace Agreement, which is barely gaining momentum, although we still believe that the prospects for peace in Mali are real because the signatories of the Peace Agreements still believe in it, thanks to the massive political and economic support of the international community.

With regard to Libya, the African Union is working via neighbouring countries and the dispatch of a special envoy and an international Libya monitoring group. In the countries of the Lake Chad Basin Commission, the African Union has strongly supported the use of the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram. In other countries of the region in the Sahel, we practice preventative diplomacy and closely monitor developments in those countries when it comes particularly to elections, especially in the Niger, Chad and Burkina Faso. The African Union is also involved through certain projects and programmes to promote or support good governance, particularly decentralization, deradicalization, support for electoral processes, and human rights.

Economically, the African Union has two items on its agenda. First is the mobilization of African institutions working in the economic sphere, such as the African Development Bank, the New Partnership for Africa's Development and several departments of the African Union Commission. The second involves the coordination of Sahel strategies. Given the multiplicity of such strategies, it was agreed in November 2013 that a coordination framework would be established for those strategies, to be managed by the countries of the region. Mali chaired the framework for today years; today Chad is in the Chair. The African Union and the United Nations provide the secretariat for what we have called the Ministerial Coordination Platform of Sahel Strategies.

In conclusion, the Sahel remains a regional rife with difficulties. With respect to security issues, two situations deserve the ongoing focus of the Council. The first is the situation in northern Mali, where despite all that has been done by the international community there is no improvement. Something must therefore be done to avert a future in which the terrorists will have gained the upper hand over the rest of the international community. The second is the situation in Libya. So long as Libya remains unstable, there will be no peace in the Sahel. It is as simple as that. These issues must therefore remain on the Council's agenda.

Turning to development, we happily note that there is continued interest in the Sahel, but the region's needs are huge and the international community's efforts must be long-term. One felicitous development in the region that must be supported is the assumption of ownership of all these strategies on the part of countries of the region. I refer here to the establishment of the Group of Five (G-5) Sahel, which emerged as a result of all the debates held since 2013 under the Nouakchott Process. The G-5 must be supported, but we must not forget that the Sahel region covers an area greater than that, and that in order to meet certain challenges, such as those of security and development, we must cast our gaze beyond the G-5.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I give the floor to Mr. Losada.

Mr. Losada (*spoke in Spanish*): Let me first thank Egypt, as President of the Security Council, as well as Spain and the other members of the Council for providing the European Union the opportunity to enumerate the many efforts we are making in the Sahel region towards the construction of what we consider, or wish to consider, a strategic, multifaceted partnership between the European Union and the Sahel.

I also wish to thank and commend the briefers for their outstanding statements early in this meeting, which have not only enriched the debate on the Sahel, but also demonstrate the fact that the Sahel is and must remain high on the international agenda.

(*spoke in French*)

The Sahel is the theatre of many crises and represents a multitude of challenges, but — we must not forget — opportunities as well, such as the Peace Agreement in Mali signed just one year ago, and the consolidation of regional cooperation within the Group of Five (G-5) Sahel. At the same time, however, we are witnessing growing irregular migration in African territory and towards Europe, a rise of extremist and terrorist forces, as Mr. Laborde eloquently described, and the effects of climate change, including accelerated desertification in the Sahel region, as laid out by Ms. Barbut and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ibn Chambas.

I wish to make a point here. At the end of the day, we must ensure the presence of the State if we are to fight terrorism, because a vacuum of governance is the oxygen of terrorism. I shall make four observations in this regard: the European Union Sahel strategy, Mali, the Group of Five (G-5) Sahel and the fundamental question of coordination.

My first point is the strategy and actions of the European Union. The European Union was the first to adopt — even before the crisis in Mali — a strategy and comprehensive approach for the Sahel in 2011, which gave rise to a regional action plan adopted in April 2015. Its aim is to strengthen our political dialogue with the subregion and to support the countries of the Sahel region, now extended to all the countries of the G-5 Sahel.

The European Union and its member States are strongly committed to the Sahelian countries, in particular through a comprehensive approach that closely links development issues to security issues, short-term emergency measures and support for structural reforms in the medium and long terms. For us, this is very clear. There is no security without development, but there is no development without security. The two are very closely linked and form the very basis of the European Union's 2011 strategy.

The European Union is to allocate more than €5 billion to the Sahel between 2014 and 2020 through its various instruments of cooperation and humanitarian activities. That amount is expected to exceed €8 billion with the actions of member States included. Other European Union instruments include the Common Security and Defence Policy missions such as the European Union Sahel Capacity-Building Missions in Mali and the Niger, the European Union Mali Training Mission, and the actions of member States.

At the Valletta Summit in November 2015, an emergency trust fund of the European Union was adopted in favour of stability and the fight against the root causes of irregular migration and the phenomenon of displaced persons in Africa. The Sahel and Lake Chad Basin account is funded to €1 billion. Almost 30 projects were decided in January and April, amounting to nearly €382 million. On 13 June, the operational committee will meet to approve new projects. I would also recall that the terrorist threat in these two regions is a reality that we can only fight together. It is to strengthen this cooperation that the European Union supports the Multinational Joint Task Force in the fight against Boko Haram. It will, of course, continue to do so.

Climate change and its impact on the Sahel, as mentioned today by the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, is also a clear priority in the approach of the European Union. Europe was the heart of the historic agreement reached at the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and is fully committed to its implementation, particularly in the Sahel through the strengthening of the resilience capacities of the vulnerable populations — the Global Alliance for Resilience Initiative — adaptation to climate change through the support provided in the framework of the programmes of the Global Alliance against Climate Change, and the integrated and sustainable management of natural resources.

The Sahel countries are increasingly faced with desertification and land degradation, which threaten food security, livelihoods, population stability and security and, more broadly, the economies of these country, which rely heavily on agriculture. As the Permanent Representative of Spain put it so well, this is ground zero of global warming. The European Union is a major player in the Convention to Combat Desertification, whose implementation inalienable right actively supports through a wide range of initiatives, such as our support for the Great Green Wall, Action Against Desertification, the RIVER project and other projects to promote sustainable land management. The European Union and its member States are determined to continue to support the Sahel countries in this fight, which remains essential to the long-term prosperity, stability and security of the region.

My second point concerns Mali, to which President Buyoya referred. I take this opportunity to recall the historic opportunity offered by the implementation of the peace and reconciliation agreement in Mali. We must remember that we are far from where we were a year ago, when there were still clashes among the various factions. There can be no stability in the Sahek without stability in Mali. That is therefore a priority goal. I want to emphasize the strong commitment of the European Union and its member States in Mali, alongside the United Nations, using all technical and financial instruments, and to acknowledge the efforts being made by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and Operation Barkhane against these many challenges to peace in Mali and the Sahel.

My third point concerns the G-5 Sahel. The European Union welcomes the establishment of G-5 Sahel, which we support at the political level. The Group demonstrates the firm commitment of these countries to pooling their efforts to confront, together and in coordination, the many cross-border challenges in the areas of security and development.

The Summit of Heads of States of the G-5 Sahel, held on 6 November 2015 in N'Djamena in the presence of the High Representative and Vice-President of the European Commission, Federica Mogherini, set the goals to be achieved with the adoption of a European Union-G-5 Sahel road map. The road map identifies the mechanisms for dialogue, consultation and cooperation, and the main activities and joint initiatives planned for 2016. Security, border management, the fight against terrorism, the issue of youth and radicalization, trafficking and organized crime are at the heart of our shared priorities. I take this opportunity to emphasize that another meeting between the High Representative and the Foreign Ministers of the G-5 countries is scheduled for 17 June in Brussels, where they will analyse the implementation of our road map and the way ahead.

My final point concerns the coordination among the international actors. Coordination, I believe, is at the centre of our debate. If we count all the various initiatives and strategies on the Sahel, I believe that there may now be 16 or even more. It is clear that there is a real need for coordination. Such coordination does exist. President Buyoya referred earlier to the Platform and other institutions. I want to emphasize the excellent coordination between the European Union and the United Nations, which is illustrated, inter alia, by the participation of Mr. Mahamat Annadif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Annadif and Head of MINUSMA, in the European Union Political and Security Committee in Brussels, as well as by many meetings and fruitful exchanges between the institutions and their special representatives, in particular Special Representative Ibn Chambas. There is also very close cooperation with the African Union and other institutions, such as the Economic Community of West African States, and with Operation Barkhane. But we must work very hard within that coordination; otherwise, we will find ourselves working against ourselves. It goes without saying that we must work together.

Finally, it is clear that these challenges can really be met only in a framework of democratic governance and human rights, which includes the protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, democratic principles, the rule of law and equal access to justice and basic social services, the fair and sustainable management of natural resources, and of course good governance.

That is the basis of the strategic partnership between Africa and the European Union. Let me finish by quoting the High Representative in regard to building a strategic partnership based on the principle of African ownership. Her adage sums up our desire to act. "We do not work for Africa; no, we work with Africa."

The meeting rose at 6.25 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.7700

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7700th meeting

Friday, 27 May 2016, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Aboulatta	(Egypt)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Japan	Mr. Okamura
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mr. Wright
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Spain	Mr. De la Calle García
	Ukraine	Mr. Fesko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Suárez Moreno

Agenda

The situation in Somalia

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Somalia

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Somalia to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2016/484, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Angola, China, Egypt, France, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Russian Federation, Senegal, Spain, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2289 (2016).

The meeting rose at 3.05 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.7701

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7701st meeting
Friday, 27 May 2016, 3.05 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Aboulatta	(Egypt)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Japan	Mr. Okamura
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mrs. Schwalger
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	Ukraine	Mr. Fesko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Power
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015) (S/2016/460)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015) (S/2016/460)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Stephen O'Brien, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Mr. O'Brien, who is joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from Geneva.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/460, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015).

I now give the floor to Mr. O'Brien.

Mr. O'Brien: I returned yesterday from a town called Reyhanlı, in Turkey, just across the border from Syria. What I saw there was harrowing — orphaned Syrian girls and boys ranging from toddlers to young teens with no family left to look after them. I went to a hospital and met Syrians who had been injured after the internally displaced person (IDP) camp they had fled to in Syria to escape violence was itself recently bombed. I sat down at Dr. Mazin's bedside as he struggled for life with appalling and severe brain, abdominal and facial wounds, after he was struck by an air strike on Al-Quds hospital in eastern Aleppo on 27 April, as he was bravely himself saving lives. A bare whisper was all he could muster: "Please, peace". I met refugee families traumatized by the effects of five years of constant war who dream of nothing more than returning to Syria to live a normal life.

I promised to carry their stories to the Security Council. I promised to highlight once more the tragic and ever-worsening situation in Syria. But truth be told, I have run out of words to fully explain how the actions of the parties to the conflict have led to the devastation of a country and its people. As the war continues, it is innocent civilians and children who continue to be subjected to even greater levels of suffering and misery than could ever have been imagined five years ago.

I remain particularly concerned at the upsurge in violence across various parts of the country and its impact on civilians. Indiscriminate attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, including schools and hospitals, mosques and public markets, continue with impunity and total disregard for international humanitarian law. In early May, scores of civilians were killed and injured by strikes hitting two IDP settlements in Sarmada, Idlib. These were places where displaced people had sought sanctuary from the conflict. One of the strikes reportedly hit a school tent, resulting in the deaths of eight children. Just this week, several terrorist attacks claimed the lives of over 100 civilians in the coastal cities of Jableh and Tartous. Over 40 patients and accompanying family members were killed and 35 people injured when a suicide bomber walked into the Jableh hospital and detonated an explosives belt. An emergency doctor and two nurses died in that explosion, with another 11 health workers wounded. Similarly, Ziad Al-Buqaa hospital — Khan Al-Shih's last operational hospital serving people in Khan Al-Shih, Zakia and surrounding areas — was reportedly struck by barrel bombs on 17 May. This hospital provided medical services to 4,200 patients daily and served about 100,000.

The continued use of siege and starvation as a weapon of war is reprehensible. We are continually monitoring the situation on the ground throughout Syria and, based on the latest information, we now estimate that some 592,700 people are currently living in besieged areas. This includes 452,700 people besieged by the Government of Syria in various locations in rural Damascus, as well as in the Al-Waer area of Homs city, an area that I visited myself just a few months ago, but which has been closed off since March. Elsewhere, 110,000 people are besieged by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Deir ez-Zor city, 20,000 people by non-State armed groups and the Al-Nusra Front in

Foah and Kefraya in Idlib, and 10,000 besieged by the Government of Syria and non-State armed groups in Yarmouk, Damascus.

These figures are shocking, as they underscore the sharply deteriorating situation for civilians, even while the cessation of hostilities is in place. According to the most recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/460), the number of people in besieged areas was 517,700, itself up from 486,7000, due to more accurate numbers of people emerging from Deir ez-Zor, Foah and Kefraya, and Yarmouk, as the facts on the ground have changed. But I must reinforce that these figures are really shocking. Today, 592,700 people are living in besieged areas because of the appalling deteriorating situation in Al-Waer on the other side of the very line I myself crossed last year, as reported to the Council in detail.

The punishment of civilians through besiegement tactics must stop immediately. The primary responsibility lies with the party that maintains the siege and routinely and systematically denies people the basic necessities of life and freedom of movement. However, other parties that conduct military activities in or from populated areas, endangering their safety, also bear their share of responsibility for the immense suffering in besieged areas. And we cannot ignore the fact that many on all sides are profiting handsomely at the expense of innocent civilians from their ability to control the goods that enter through irregular and unofficial channels.

The humanitarian and protection situation in many hard-to-reach areas also remains critical, including in some that are on the brink of besiegement. I remain extremely concerned about the conditions for the hundreds of thousands of civilians in northern rural Homs, specifically in the towns of Rastan, Talbiseh and Taldo, as well as in the adjacent area of Habarnafse in rural Hama. People in these areas have limited freedom of movement and diminished access to clean water, medical care and food. The recent humanitarian convoys to northern rural Homs were vital but must be followed up by greater access if we are to alleviate the suffering of civilians.

The situation across Aleppo governorate also remains alarming for civilians. In northern Aleppo, just across the border from Turkey, the situation for tens of thousands of people is precarious, with many having been displaced multiple times this year alone as a result of heavy fighting between non-State armed groups and ISIL. That fighting is ongoing as of today and is likely to fuel further displacement and vulnerability along the border areas.

In Aleppo city, fighting has continued to affect civilians over the past few weeks and also had an impact on humanitarian operations. The United Nations hub in the western part of the city has repeatedly been hit by shelling, while access for cross-border aid to assist 300,000 people in eastern Aleppo city, along Castello road, the last remaining route into the area, has been repeatedly cut due to air strikes and heavy fighting.

The current reality in Syria is not something that we should or can accept. There should never be impunity for behaviour that shows complete disregard for international humanitarian law, flouts the resolutions of the Security Council, and causes such immense human suffering. One day all those responsible must and will be held to account.

Despite the extremely challenging environment, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organization partners continue their tireless efforts to meet the urgent humanitarian needs of the Syrian population. Millions of people were reached with assistance in April, while UNICEF and the World Health Organization began another nationwide immunization campaign to reach 2 million children. And cross-border shipments provided food aid to over a million people, as well as other types of assistance to tens of thousands more.

Cross-line inter-agency operations to besieged, hard-to-reach and other priority locations have continued, with over 800,000 people reached this year in these areas, and many more than once. We have very recently gained access to besieged eastern Harasta with food and other humanitarian supplies for 10,000 people — a first since March 2013, over three years ago. In addition, since 10 April, the World Food Programme successfully carried out 44 high altitude airdrops over the besieged city of Deir-ez-Zor. These airdrops mean that 762 metric tons of urgently needed food assistance, distributed by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent on the ground, reached approximately 100,000 people.

But several weeks of air drops have brought an amount of food equivalent to only one convoy. Let me repeat that several weeks of air drops have brought an amount of food equivalent to only one convoy by road, and the Council should have no doubt about the

challenges our partners are facing to deliver assistance by air. Airdrops are an option of last resort; they are costly, dangerous and technically very challenging. However, as I have said before, the gravity and scale of need means that the United Nations must consider such options, but only as a last resort, and not forgetting that the United Nations would require the approval of the Government of Syria.

Deliberate interference and restrictions by the parties, notably the Syrian Government, continue to prevent effective aid delivery. For example, on 20 April, the United Nations submitted its inter-agency convoy plan for the month of May, which included requests to reach 904,750 people across 35 besieged, hard-to-reach and priority cross-line locations. The Syrian authorities granted approval in full to only 14 locations, with 224,000 people, and approvals conditional on the type and amount of assistance to another eight locations, for some 306,000 people. That effectively left more than 40 per cent of the planned target population, including in Aleppo, Al-Waer, and Talbiseh, without access to basic necessities and food. That of course leaves me extremely concerned. We recently submitted our plan for June with a request to reach 1.1 million people in 34 besieged, hard-to-reach and other priority cross-line locations, including all the places we could not reach in May. I call on the Syrian Government to approve the plan in full and to remove any and all conditions, not least regarding the amount or type of aid that can be delivered.

Even for the locations that were approved for deliveries in May, the Syrian Government has severely curtailed the ability of the United Nations to reach those in need. A convoy and assessment mission to Darayya, where 4,000 civilians have been besieged for almost four years, scheduled for 12 May, had to be aborted due to unconscionable last-minute restrictions imposed by Government security forces. At the last checkpoint, Government forces removed all basic supplies, including nutritional items for infants. No conclusion can be drawn other than that this was simply an effort to further punish civilians, and this time infants. Similarly, an inter-agency convoy that was supposed to reach Mu'addamiyah on 14 May was unable to deploy. Security force representatives never turned up at the warehouse to monitor the loading of trucks, as previously agreed, despite constant outreach at various levels. As a result, the convoy was never given permission to depart. At the same time, non-State armed groups continue to prevent a United Nations assessment mission from proceeding to the besieged towns of Foah and Kafraya in Idlib governorate.

Moreover, the removal of life-saving medicines and medical supplies such as surgical, midwifery and emergency kits has continued unabated, with supplies for an estimated 150,000 treatments removed from convoys since the beginning of the year. Since the adoption of resolution 2139 (2014), medical supplies for more than 650,000 treatments have been removed from aid convoys. Such restrictions are not only violations of earlier guarantees and approvals obtained from the Syrian Government and other parties, they are deliberately and cynically designed to inflict more unnecessary suffering on civilians living in besieged and hard-to-reach locations.

As the Council knows, the international community came together in Istanbul earlier this week for the World Humanitarian Summit, called for by the Secretary-General. I emphasized at the Summit that we must all live up to our responsibility, collectively and individually, to meet the needs of the most vulnerable people and make a real difference for the people who need our help most. Syria is a stark example of why the Secretary-General called for the Summit. As he has said, we are one humanity, with a shared responsibility not only to keep people alive, but to give people a chance at life in dignity. The bottom line is that, politically, we continue to fail the people of Syria dismally in that regard.

On 17 May, the International Syria Support Group called on all parties to the Syrian conflict to immediately comply with the terms of the cessation of hostilities. It further called for the lifting of all sieges and urged the Syrian Government to swiftly approve United Nations delivery requests in their entirety. Frankly, the parties to the conflict, and those with influence over them, urgently need to turn this into decisive, positive action that can have a direct, positive effect on Syrian lives on the ground.

However, let me state clearly that protecting civilians and granting access should never be dependent on political negotiations or as a bargaining chip for ad hoc deals on the ground. These are fundamental tenets of international humanitarian law and must be respected by the parties and all who support them. There must be access to those in need, and not just to a third of those in need, but to all; not just one-off deliveries, but sustained, immediate and unimpeded humanitarian

access throughout the country; not just access to deliver vaccines, but the full package of supplies, including medical and surgical items, delivered on the basis of the needs assessments made by the United Nations. The sieges have to be lifted once and for all, and immediately. They exist today only because of a lack of will to end them. Millions of women, men and children and, as I mentioned early in my statement, Dr. Mazin — struggling for life in that bed in Reyhanli and all across Syria — each and every one of them depends on the Council's action, right now.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. O'Brien for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I was expecting the Under-Secretary-General to begin his statement by offering his condolences to the Government and the people of Syria for the hundreds of innocent civilian victims in Jableh and Tartus who perished a few days ago. The Council denounced that action and express its condolences in a press statement a couple of days ago.

Like the Council, I was surprised to hear what the Under-Secretary-General said about his visit to Turkey and what he saw there — surprising things, as he put it, in Syrian refugee camps in Turkey. He saw children who had no food to eat. What I would like to ask him, and the Council, is what happened to the billions pledged at various conferences in Kuwait and elsewhere for the host countries Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon? What happened with the propaganda being put out in the countries of the Gulf and elsewhere that talks about the refugee camps as if they were five-star hotels? Why does the Under-Secretary-General not know about the Saudi cleric Abdullah Al-Muhaysini, who recruits children and acts as a mufti for the terrorist group Ahrar Al-Sham, which is expanding in northern Aleppo and Idlib? Those are facts that we have to consider. What he said about Jableh and Tartus, which were shelled during a suicide attack by a terrorist, is an incomplete description, to put it mildly. He knows perfectly well that Da'esh and Ahrar Al-Sham claimed responsibility for the terrorist acts there, and the perpetrators' identity is therefore very well known to him.

Some Council members claim to be concerned by the humanitarian situation and the protection of human rights in Syria. These States hold meetings, make statements and issue communiqués right, left and centre, as though they were doves of peace and only worried about the prosperity, stability and peace of the Syrian people. That is how they present themselves. However, the reality is very different because anyone who wants to know can just look at the behaviour of these States and see that they play a critical role in the suffering of the Syrian people and the tragedy that has befallen them, as well as in the way it is being treated, as recalled in the statements on the protection of civilians in Syria, Iraq and Libya.

Some States protect the terrorist entities, including within the Security Council. That became obvious when some refused to label Jaysh Al-Islam a terrorist organization in the Security Council, despite the request made by the Russian Federation. Those bodies work in an alliance was with Jabhat Al-Nusra, which is a terrorist organization, and commit terrorist acts every day. Jaysh Al-Islam targets civilians in their shelters in Damascus and Aleppo and other cities. They perpetrate terrorist acts. Recently such acts were carried out together with Da'esh in Jabla and Tartus in Syria, as was just mentioned. This, as I said, resulted in hundreds of innocent lives lost. Those same States refused yesterday the request of the Syrian Government to call Jaish-e-Mohammad a terrorist organization.

This situation becomes more glaring when these same States invite these groups to participate in the Geneva negotiations, as though there were such a thing as moderate terrorism and as though they would both allow and not allow terrorism. The same States enable the access of representatives of these entities into their countries and allow them access to the media. That was the case with the head of Jabhat Al-Nusra, who was received by the Qatari channel Al-Jazeera on several occasions, and with the representative of foreign relations of Ahrar Al-Sham, who was in the United States on a British passport in January. There was an article about that in the Washington Post, on 18 July 2015, and in the Telegraph. This is an attempt to burnish the image of that terrorist group, to use terrorist groups for political blackmail and to implement a particular agenda.

This has become obvious in the statements made by the representatives of these States — including the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia and Turkey, as well as other countries — when they clearly threaten to maintain their support for terrorism in Syria unless the leadership is changed. The same

States impose unilateral illegal economic sanctions on the Syrian people. That increases the suffering of the Syrian people and is a huge burden on the public and private sectors, which are trying to provide food stuffs, pharmaceuticals and ensure the people's basic needs are met. This has forced some sectors of the population to leave Syria out of a sense of insecurity and a lack of subsistence, but the Council ignores this dire humanitarian situation in Syria.

How can we talk about putting an end to the suffering and tragedy of the Syrian people inside and outside the country and putting an end to the humanitarian crisis in Syria? How can we know that the humanitarian and political situation is uncertain? What can we do to implement some of our goals? Suffering should not be used by certain Governments as a tool for political and other types of blackmail, as President Erdoğan did a couple of days ago when he threatened to change the refugee situation if Turkish nationals were not given a visa exemption for European countries. How can the humanitarian situation improve when President Erdoğan uses Turkish territory, including the United Nations corridors, as a transit area for tens of thousands of foreign terrorist fighters? Furthermore, the Turkish regime provides weapons to terrorists and uses humanitarian convoys as a cover.

The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria appears not to know about any of this, despite the fact that I myself told him about it on several occasions. Furthermore, we have drawm the attention of members of the Security Council to this matter in detail in our official communications. The Erdoğan regime imprisons customs officers, judges and reporters who describe the situation honestly. Why is it that the Secretariat rewarded the Erdoğan regime by holding the first World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul when the regime allows children to be recruited in refugee camps?

How can we put an end to the crisis without addressing the violations of the relevant Security Council resolutions on combating terrorism, in particular resolution 2253 (2015), which deals with training for terrorism committed by Israel, Qatar and Saudi Arabia? This has clear consequences for the security and stability of the region.

I would like to discuss the way that the issue of humanitarian access is manipulated. The report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/460) presents this inaccurately, and what he describes is very far from the reality and based on unreliable sources. Two days ago we sent two identical letters to the President of the Security Council and the Secretary-General with regard to this matter, but I will limit myself to simply underscoring the following points.

The claim that the Syrian Government prevents the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Darayya is totally false. In fact, the Syrian Government allowed the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to enter Darayya on 17 May to provide humanitarian assistance. The representative of the ICRC informed the Foreign Ministry that it was not able to enter Darayya owing to logistical administrative and security reasons. When it comes to the reservations raised by some with regard to medical supplies, the Government of Syria agrees to allow medical assistance to be provided to all regions except for tools that can be used by terrorists.

The Government of Syria stands ready to cooperate with the United Nations to address all convoy-related issues. As regards inter-agency convoy requests, I recall that the United Nations submitted 26 requests for inter-agency humanitarian assistance convoys for hot areas in May, within the framework of the May plan. The Syrian Government accepted 19 of those 26 requests. As I said, 19 were accepted, but as of 24 May —two days ago — the United Nations had sent only three convoys out of the 26 requested. The Government of Syria accepted 19 and the United Nations only sent three inter-agency humanitarian assistance convoys. If there are sometimes delays when it comes to authorizations and their implementation, that is a result of our concern for the safety and security of humanitarian workers, and the concern that humanitarian assistance reach those to whom it is destined.

The Government of Syria remains committed to reducing the humanitarian suffering of our people. We are ready to implement any national measures needed in order to attain that objective. We continue to cooperate with the United Nations and to facilitate the work, but cooperation is not a one-way street. The United Nations also has to cooperate, coordinate and consult with the Syrian Government when it comes to humanitarian assistance, instead of criticizing it and calling it into question without result. The United Nations and other international organizations have, in the five years of the crisis' existence, been able to get

humanitarian assistance to millions of people thanks only to the cooperation of the Government of Syria.

Lastly, we frequently talk of the danger of terrorism and the importance of fighting terrorism. That should not be interpreted to suggest that we do not understand the depth of the humanitarian crisis in some regions of Syria or that we do not understand the importance of improving the humanitarian situation in Syria. On the contrary, we do. However, we believe that in order to put a lasting end to the humanitarian crisis, we need to deal with the issue seriously, and to tackle terrorism that is supported from the outside and external interference in our internal affairs, and not through financial contributions pledged in various conferences as a matter of form — although those contributions have their own significance.

The Syrian Government underscores the importance of the political dimension. We participated in the Geneva negotiations seriously. The problem was that some States had imposed the Riyadh delegation as the only interlocutor. That delegation came with preconditions, which were to ensure that the negotiations failed. Indeed, they withdrew on several occasions, following direct instructions from their sponsors.

Ms. Power (United States of America): I do not want to take much time here, but I am struck by the number of factual claims that have been made by the Ambassador from Syria that impugn the reputation of the United Nations and the brave humanitarians who are trying to get food to people who are being starved — to death, in many cases. I think there is some irony in a Government that pulls infant formula, anaesthetics and surgical equipment off of convoys and that does not even deign to respond to successive United Nations requests, accusing the United Nations of not showing up with convoys when there are people starving. But, I am not the authority on this matter; the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is. As such, I would like to ask Under-Secretary-General O'Brien to respond to some of the allegations made by the Syrian ambassador.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I call on Mr. O'Brien.

Mr. O'Brien: As I have said on many occasions before, my only authority comes from attempts to ensure that we gather facts from the best sources possible — both with our own eyes on the ground and from those we are able to trust to produce the facts — and to relay them to the Security Council in a completely fair and honest manner. Where there are reports rather than seen facts, we make judgments about the quality of those reports. So, having laid out the best information we have available, I stand by all the facts I outlined in the statement I just made to the Council.

I can certainly stand by the facts I gave early in my statement because that was my personal testimony, in particular my sitting down at the bedside of Dr. Mazin as he struggled for life, barely able to whisper. All he could muster to say was "Please, peace". I think that sums up precisely why we need to raise ourselves above the level of disputes on the numbers, which simply do not pay sufficient respect to the deep needs of the people who are doing their very best to help or those who continue to struggle after five years of a fight that could be brought to an end if there were sufficient political will — not least from the Government, which represents an alternative factual base. I stand by the facts that I presented, and I am more than happy to write to the Council at a later stage, setting out further helpful background details.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should simply like to raise a question with regard to procedure here in the Council, because it is my understanding that this was to be a briefing followed by private consultations. Are we going to be discussing Mr. O'Brien's briefing in public meeting or is it going to be in consultations? If it is public, then we should begin the discussion here, but I believe that otherwise we should be conducting this discussion in closed consultations.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The President of the Council cannot prevent anyone from taking the floor, but I propose that we begin our private consultations so that we can hear from Mr. O'Brien.

I give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arabic Republic to make a further statement.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I regret having to take the floor for a second time. I will be brief. I would like to say that I too presented irrefutable facts. We are perfectly open to hearing any explanation that might contradict what I have stated. We do not wish to harm the reputation of the United Nations, as we are one of its founding Member States. I am here as a representative of that Member State. We are proud of having been a founding Member State and have always tirelessly defended the United

Nations. However, the Organization is not composed exclusively of angels; I wish to combat its demons.

The representative of the United States remarked that I did not refer to the report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/460), but that is inaccurate. Everything I said was with respect to that report. We are not levelling accusations; rather, we are calling the attention of Council members to problems related to humanitarian assistance. On several occasions, we have said that Turkey is using United Nations corridors to move weapons. Mr. O'Brien and his colleagues have not responded to that statement.

A few days ago, it was revealed that the Erdoğan regime was sending weapons along the corridors. He has imprisoned customs officers, journalists and judges. If that was an attack on the United Nations, it would mean that the information about Turkey was false, and that the statement made by the Ambassador of the United States proves that it did not occur.

We are familiar with the cases of Libya and Iraq, and I do not want to add Africa to that. Everyone knows what is going in Africa. We want the work of the United Nations to reflect its Charter. We do not want a new Charter, casually rewritten according to new rules. We must defend the dignity and sovereignty of States, not the attacks that are constantly being made on that dignity and sovereignty, and we must aid their citizens.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 3.50 p.m.